

ATTITUDE OF FEMALES TOWARDS THE COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS OF LUXURIOUS BRANDS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PESHAWAR DISTRICTFaryal Yousaf¹, Dr. Shaista Ali², Dr. Zahin Anjum³, Dr. Hina Gul*

Original Article

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Abstract

The research study was designed to explore the attitudes of women towards counterfeit products and their willingness to knowingly purchase counterfeit luxury brands. Preferences of 100 women aged 20-40 years from different areas of Peshawar were recorded in relation to the affordability, quality and satisfaction level of counterfeit products. Data was collected using convenience sampling method through a self-administered questionnaire and the recorded data was analyzed through chi-square test using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Highly significant results were identified among the sample of both age groups i.e., 20-29 years and 30-40 years in relation to counterfeit products. Majority of the respondents preferred buying counterfeit products of luxurious brands as they were more affordable and were satisfied with the quality of the product as well. Similarly, women were greatly comfortable and pleased with the use of counterfeit products as with any branded product.

Keywords: Counterfeit Products, Luxurious Brands, Affordability, Quality

INTRODUCTION

Branded products are generally found to be absolute and legitimate. Products produced by a certified brand are life long, as they go through many tests for enduring good quality. Despite the fact that brand names are more expensive, they are still willingly purchased by women for prestige, self confidence and for the perfect fit. Probably, not all women are pleased to pay for the logo of the commodity. Indeed, they seek for products that are modest, cost effective and appealing so as to compete with the standard of branded products. The said products are replication of original brands and are usually recognized as counterfeit products.

The concept of counterfeiting is presumed to have progressive growth consequently in 1970s (Bian and Veloutsou, 2005), when Levi's revealed huge number of counterfeit product of jeans compartment having its brand, name, logo and the attractive label that were made in South East Asia and were distributed all over Western Europe (Walker, 1981). After that, the different counterfeit products have overflowed the marketplace few decades ago and have amplified at an astral rate (Phau and Teah, 2009). In precise, the counterfeiting of branded products of fashion commodities is principally widespread including items such as garments, accessories, wrist watches, handbags, wallets, and stationary etc. Counterfeiting is held responsible for instigating solemn social and economic impairment mutually to the authentic manufacturers and the society in totality (Bush et al., 1989). Irrespective of the reparations instigated by counterfeit goods, the anti-counterfeiter group observed that customers disdain the adverse outcomes of counterfeit goods. The team further identified that nearby one-third of clients may purposely buy counterfeit goods when offered the affordable price and fine quality besides 29 percent were of the opinion that there is no harm in

product counterfeiting until and unless the buyers are at risk due to these products (Bian and Veloutsou, 2005).

Attitude refers to a cultural disposition to react or evaluate a certain situation in an approval or disapproving manner (Huang et al., 2004). The concept of attitude is recurrently used by means of a predictor of the intents and behaviors of consumer. Since attitudes are unable to be observed unswervingly, researchers ought to rely on governing the attitudes of consumers with the help of research methods (Huang et al., 2004).

Till date, the four primary dimensions viz. economic, legal, quality and ethical have been retrieved beneficial in verifying the attitudes of consumers (Cordellet al., 1996; Ang et al., 2001; Gupta et al., 2004). Amongst these dimensions, price has been documented as the essential economic factor to perform a significant part in defining attitude regarding counterfeit products. Henceforth, if the customers get the idea that they are being bifurcated by the original good manufacturers, they will probably convey added fortunate attitude to counterfeits and indeed may further be probable to buy the counterfeit goods (Ramayah et al., 2002). Certain features are not able to affect the attitude of consumers about the counterfeit items that includes; religion, gender, incentive for personal achievements, situational circumstances (Gupta et al., 2004; Nill and Shultz, 1996) and communism (Wang et al., 2005). In addition, fashion related products, images and prestige are essential to consumers of top quality luxury brands. Customers of counterfeit products are regarded as products of duplicate features and guise to attain the status image deprived of sacrificing a noteworthy volume of money for it (Bloch et al., 1993; Delener, 2000). Hereafter, purchasers of branded counterfeits/products are generally known as "snobs", nevertheless lacking the monetary sources to manage to pay for the authentic merchandise (Delener, 2000).

Fashion equally affects our self-concepts and our inner feelings (Tombs, 2010). The emblematic nature of fashion substances can include styles, brands, venter outlets, uniforms, and likewise affiliation with certain subgroups. The connotations that these merchandises can subsidize to an individual's logical sense of who they truly are. Conferring to Grant and Graeme (2005), women are known to be exceedingly fashion-sensitive. The procuring of fashion items is sturdily predisposed by the name of brand and its associations, although parental and peer group approval remain the signifying factors in affecting the purchase of fashion clothing. The verdicts of Phau and Siew (2008) designates that position seeking teenagers have additional optimistic attitude toward local products than overseas vis-à-vis the affluence of care and comfort of the luxury products. Nelson (2005) observed in his study that extremely brand-conscious teens professed the highest effects of product settlements on their personal and others' buying behaviors, hitherto less brand-conscious teens exposed the major gap in insights of impact on self and peers.

Low price is considered as a significant issue that has been affecting the demand for imitative goods (Dodge et al. 1996; Albers Miller, 1999; Prendergast et al. 2002; Harvey and Walls, 2003). Providing rather limited lifecycle to Fashion related items and goods including apparels, handbags, shoes and accessories, many consumers are unwilling to disburse huge money on them, as these products are only in fashion for a limited period of time and are generally recognized as old fashioned and outdated goods (Ramayah et al., 2002). Women wish to purchase new products but just few of them can obtain them. Those who face difficulties to buy latest and innovative brands, the affordable real brands give them an opportunity to low cost counterfeits to complete their demand. Zaichkowsky et al., (2009) indicated that the respondents revealed that luxury products are like fun and are at least possess the worth of the price they paid for them, whether they were original or counterfeit. Almost 30

percent of respondents owned no counterfeits and only original goods. These respondents believed that counterfeits were of inferior quality and thought that possession of original luxury products was more prestigious as compared to counterfeit luxury goods. Contrary to that, those people who purchase more counterfeits had a very positive opinion about these and they did not consider these goods as inferior. Generally, 70% of respondents shared that the quality, value, durability satisfaction level, and status of original brand products had not declined due to the wide range availability of counterfeits. Moreover, most of the respondents were not agree that the availability and presence of counterfeits has negatively affected their purchase practice of original luxury brands. In this regard, authors also signify that consumers' intention in purchasing counterfeit products relies on the attitudes they have toward counterfeits which are greatly influenced by factors such as price of the product, quality elucidation, perceived risk etc.

Usually, women desire to compare the prices, quality and style of the products at the time of purchase. They are willing to spend a significant amount of time and money in searching for a compatible product; as the level of risk perceived by them is high and hence, have high involvement in purchase. In buying products women particularly prefer branded products because of the good quality and to maintain their status in the community; but now for the last few decades, the trend of counterfeit is on its peak. This study intends to find out the affordability of counterfeit products as compared to the branded products. It aims to identify the quality of counterfeit products. The study further aims to explore the satisfaction level of counterfeit products among the women of Peshawar.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The entire sample of the study contained randomly selected women from Peshawar city. A total of 100 women belonging to different fields of life i.e., students, professionals, house-wives participated in the study with age ranging from 20-40 years. Preferences of women were recorded through a self-administered questionnaire containing questions related to the affordability, quality and satisfaction level of counterfeit products. Data collected was then analyzed through Chi-Square test.

Instruments

Self-Constructed Questionnaire

A self-constructed questionnaire was formulated to obtain the required information from adult women of District Peshawar. The questionnaire comprised of six close-ended items based on 5-point Likert Scale. All these questions were framed in simple, direct and easily understandable language. The calculated completion time for each questionnaire was approximately 05 minutes. The demographic data sheet comprised of information of the respondents related to their age, qualification, occupation, marital status and income level. Total 06 questions were added about counterfeit products to this section based on 5-Point Likert Scale ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The items scored higher on scale reflected higher satisfaction and lower scores reflected lower satisfaction towards counterfeit products.

Data Analysis

The SPSS version 18, was used to analyse data in order to find out the preference level of women towards counterfeit products by applying chi-square test.

RESULTS

A total, 100 respondents including women of age range 20 – 40 years from different regions of Peshawar were selected for undertaking this study. The collected data was analyzed through SPSS version 18.0. The results revealed significant relationship among the women preferences in relation to the affordability, quality and satisfaction level of counterfeit products. The results of the study are presented and discussed in the form of tables and bar diagrams in the following section:

Table 1**Women Preferences in relation to Affordability of Counterfeit Products (N=100)**

Age	Buying counterfeit of luxurious brand is affordable and a better choice					Total
	Strongly Disagree n(%)	Disagree (%)	Unsure n(%)	Agree n(%)	Strongly Agree(%)	
20-29yrs	6 6.0%	0 .0%	3 3.0%	5 5.0%	36 36.0%	50 50.0%
30-40yrs	11 11.0%	4 4.0%	1 1.0%	12 12.0%	22 22.0%	50 50.0%
Total	17 17.0%	4 4.0%	4 4.0%	17 17.0%	58 58.0%	100 100.0%

$\chi^2(10, 100) 12.732, p<.01$

Table 1 displays the results regarding women preferences in relation to affordability of counterfeit products (N=100). Significant relation was observed in the preferences of respondents with two age groups, $\chi^2(10, 100) 12.732, p<.01$. According to the results, counterfeit products were greatly preferred by the population of age group 20 - 29 years, while the respondents with age group of 30 - 40 years also preferred counterfeit products.

Figure 1 Bar Diagram showing Women Preferences in relation to Affordability of Counterfeit Products

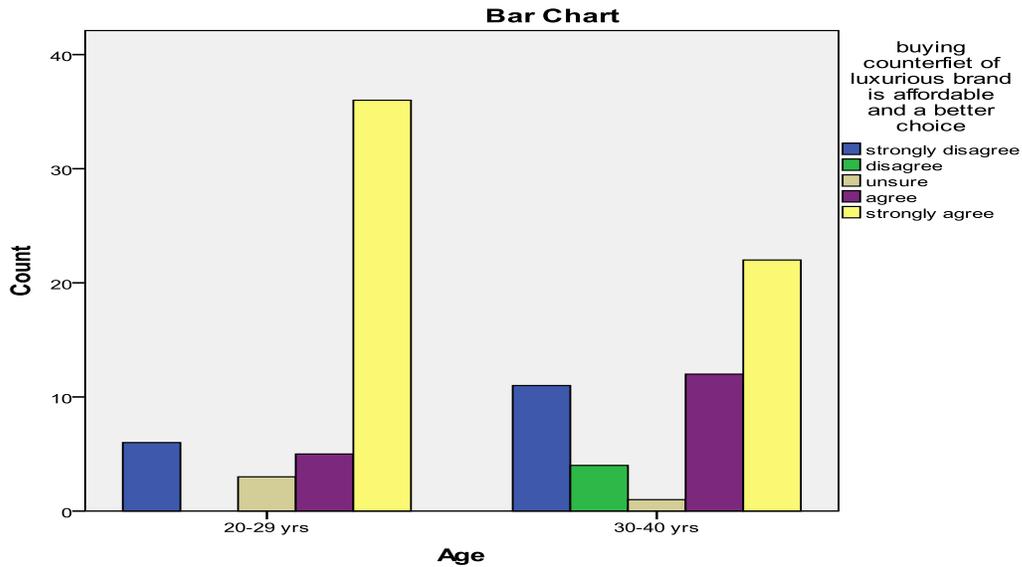


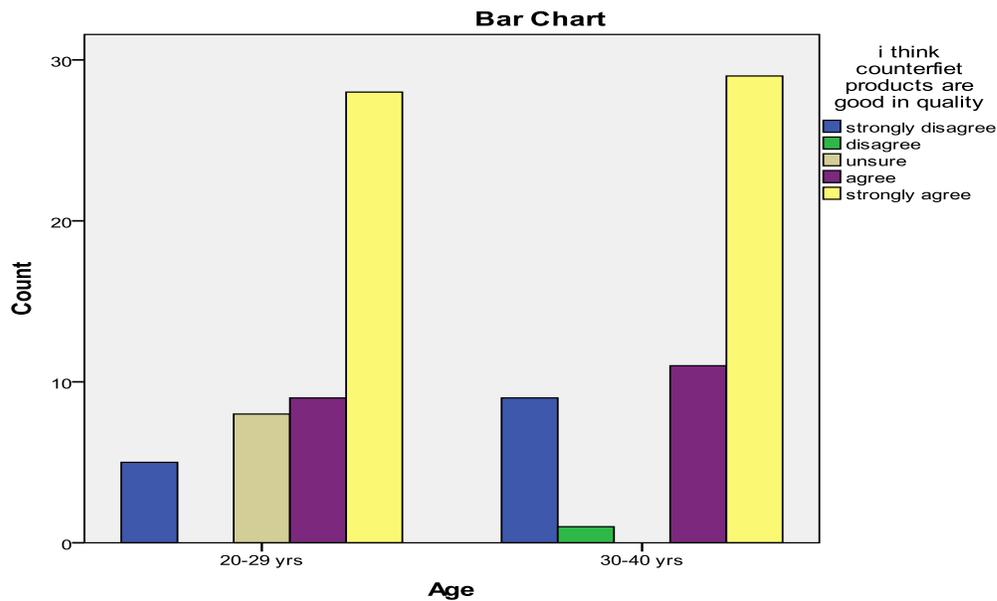
Table 2

Women Preferences in relation to the Quality of Counterfeit Products (N=100)

Age	Counterfeit Products are Good in Quality					Total
	Strongly Disagree(%)	Disagree (%)	Unsure n(%)	Agree n(%)	Strongly Agree(%)	
20-29yrs	5 5.0%	0 .0%	8 8.0%	9 9.0%	28 28.0%	50 50.0%
30-40 yrs	9 9.0%	1 1.0%	0 .0%	11 11.0%	29 29.0%	50 50.0%
Total	14 14.0%	1 1.0%	8 8.0%	20 20.0%	57 57.0%	100 100.0%

$\chi^2(10, 100) 10.30, p < .01$

Table 2 displays the results regarding women preferences in relation to the quality of counterfeit products (N=100). Significant difference was observed in the preferences of respondents with various ages, $\chi^2(10, 100) 10.30, p < .01$. Respondents of both the age groups strongly agreed that counterfeit products are good in quality.

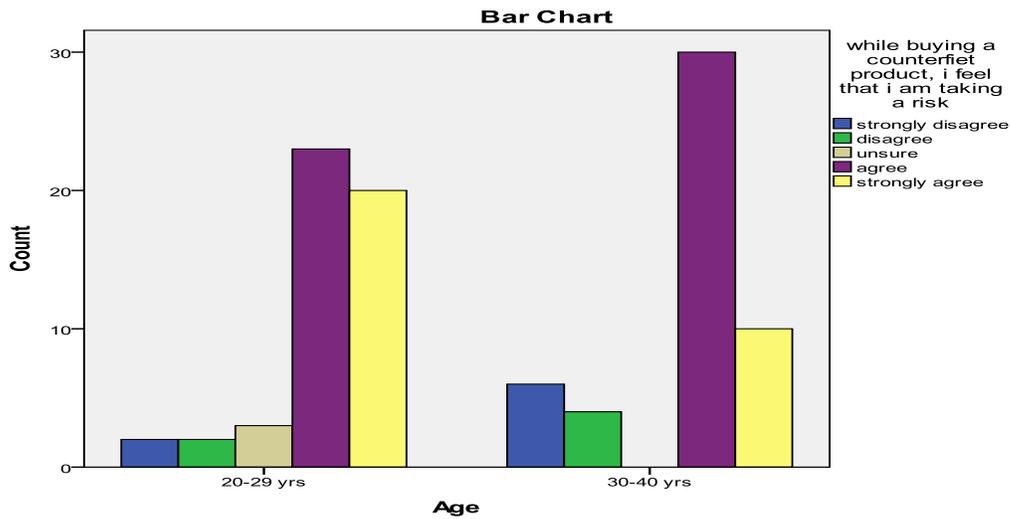
Figure 2 Bar Diagram showing Women Preferences in relation to the Quality of Counterfeit Products**Table 3****Satisfaction Level of Women towards Counterfeit Products (N=100)**

Age	While Buying Counterfeit Products, I feel that I am taking a Risk					Total
	Strongly Disagree(%)	Disagree (%)	Unsure n(%)	Agree n(%)	Strongly Agree(%)	
20-29yrs	23 23.0%	20 20.0%	3 3.0%	2 2.0%	2 2.0%	50 50.0%
30-40 yrs	30 30.0%	10 10.0%	0 .0%	6 6.0%	4 4.0%	50 50.0%
Total	53 53.0%	30 3.0%	3 3.0%	8 8.0%	6 6.0%	100 100.0%

$\chi^2(10, 100) 9.925, p < .01$

Table 3 displays the results regarding satisfaction level of women towards counterfeit products (N=100). Significant results were obtained regarding the preferences of respondents in the two age groups, $\chi^2(10, 100) 9.925, p < .01$. Population of the age 20 - 29 years strongly disagreed (23.0%) that buying counterfeit products are a risk. Similarly, 30% women of 30-40 years also disagreed to the statement. Only few women were of the opinion that counterfeit products were a risk in buying.

Figure 3 Bar Diagram showing Satisfaction Level of Women towards Counterfeit Products



DISCUSSION

In spite the extensive range of counterfeiting, numerous studies have surveyed the consumer attitudes concerning counterfeit products. Counterfeits, specifically in fashion products, have widely fascinated many consumers around the globe. Price is one of the significant determinants in affecting consumers' intention to buy original brands or counterfeits (Lai and Zaichkowsky ,1999). No doubt genuine products are highly priced and possess premium quality but it is not an obligation that all must buy and consume them. Numerous consumers, predominantly in developing countries, do not mind purchasing products that are low in quality. For individuals who are fond of fashion but cannot manage to pay for original trendy clothing, having a similar look product offers them achance to relish the status of the popular luxurious brand.The current study was aimed to gauge the women's (age 20-40 years) perception about counterfeit products. The study basic aim was to evaluate the price, quality, and satisfaction level of counterfeit products.

According to the analyzed results of women preferences in relation to affordability of counterfeit products (N=100), significant relation was observed in the preferences of respondents within two age groups. Both the age groups were of the opinion that buying a counterfeit product of luxurious brand is affordable and a better choice. Everyone can easily get their favorite product as a similar copy of original brand in much affordable price. Consumers frequently purchase the counterfeit luxury brands to attain the rank benefits linked with the usage of the product. Henceforth, brand dissemination bids better affordability to consumers who would then be more motivated in purchasing thecounterfeit variant (Wee et al., 1995). The qualities and image from the main brand is transferred tothe diffusion brand consequently to maintain its status image, making it more reasonable for consumers to accomplish the position image without doing the brand a disfavor by purchasing the counterfeit substitute (Gentry et al., 2006). It was prevalent from the results of the study that women had high interest in clothing and they spent money on buying counterfeit products as they were of the opinion that these products are affordable and have low price as compared to branded products and it is a better choice for low earner women. Numerous studies indicates that price incentives are considered

more accurate predictors for the consumer readiness to intentional purchase of counterfeit luxury brands (Bloch et al., 1993; Albers-Miller, 1999; Harvey and Walls, 2003).

The consumers' willingness in buying a counterfeit luxury product directly relates to the service ability and valuable life of the purchased product. Since last few decades counterfeit products signifies higher trend in Peshawar city because of its good quality along with the offered price. Previously the quality of these products was found to be inferior but with the passage of time quality products are produced as counterfeits which are fair duplicates of the original brand. Keeping the short-lived fashion of today, respondents of the current study identified that counterfeit products are good replacement of branded products as now a days they complete their need for specific time being in fashion. Kishna (2011), found in his study that in early days manufacturing brands were the leaders of the apparel industry and the penetration of the private label brands was limited. But things have now changed as private label brands are leading each segment of the industry. Greenberg et al., (1983) is of the opinion that consumers most often pay additional attention to the durability and reliability of the product when considering the purchase of functional products. However, status benefits related with usage is the key driving force for purchasing the counterfeit luxury products. It is sensible to assume that the appearance and visibilities are additional substantial features for fashion and symbolic products (Prendergast et al., 2002). Thus, the product features for purchasing a luxury branded counterfeit would primarily base on appearance and visibility.

CONCLUSION

From the current study, it was thus concluded that women are highly satisfied with the use of counterfeit products as they find them good in quality and affordable. The results of the study are key indicators of the fact that increase in consumer expectations of quality counterfeit products can be accredited to more than a few factors. Foremost, the global development of the counterfeit trade has intended augmented competition for the producers of counterfeits, who are now competing against other illegitimate sellers. It is often the producers who search for the consumers through innumerable different distribution networks, such as launching sites on the internet as opposed to prior cases where the consumers would vigorously hunt for the producer. This designates an additional well-adjusted exchange deal between the producers and consumers, which strengthens the fact that both parties engaging in the counterfeit dealings are held co-responsible. Subsequently, technological advances implies that producers are better able to duplicate luxury branded designs, at the same time providing entirety that the original product does. Every so often, it is tough to identify the imitations and the genuine article apart. As a result, they are frequently sold to authentic retailers and departmental stores, without the buyers and every so often even the store possessors being able to distinguish the differences in the quality. Subsequently, consumer expectations for the quality of counterfeit luxury brands have risen.

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