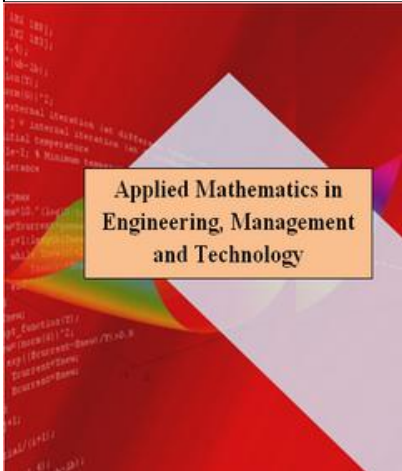


Investigating fake product's purchase behavior

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Introduction

Ethical considerations are playing an increasingly important role in consumer decision making (Creyer and Ross, 1997). There are a rising number of products carrying ethical labels such as Fair trade and an increased clarity on information carried by the products. As a result, consumers are facing a growing number of choices in supporting ethical attributes and issues. What it says on the labeling and packaging changes consumers' behaviors, attitudes and willingness to pay (Caswell, 1992; Lee and Hatcher, 2001).

Most studies in this area either use descriptive (e.g. Loureiro et al., 2002) or trade-off analysis (e.g. Ness and Gerhardy, 1994) in examining consumers' attitudes and preferences. However, past studies also found neither attitudes towards products carrying ethical attributes nor the preferences for certain

attributes can predict consumers' behaviour (Carrigan et al., 2004; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

Marketing ethical products is relying on creating a set of values around the ethical trademark and quality targeting the naturally sympathetic consumers with ethical awareness. Ethical augmentation theory identified that consumers may turn away from brands that conduct themselves unethically (Crane, 2001), however, other patronage factors, such as price, quality and convenience, are still likely to determine consumers' decisions (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Tallontire et al., 2001). When purchasing products carrying ethical or socially responsible attributes, consumers are driven by perceived quality and brand status; the ethical benefits are an added value in particular in emotional terms. Therefore, the credibility of product labeling becomes an important issue (McDonagh, 2002). Ethical consumption has become a broad implication of concerns in consumptions ranging from political, religious, spiritual, environmental, and social to other motives for choosing one product over the other or sometimes it reflects on the frequency of purchase of one product over the other. The ethical indicators are attributes such as recyclable or recycled packaging, organic and Fair-trade and avoiding to buy counterfeit product (Mai, 2014).

Fair-trade is a symbolism of the anti-exploitation and global citizenship that its functionality of paying the producer fairly means usually consumers pay more for Fair-trade than non-Fair trade products. In view of the trends, generally speaking, the increased consumption is a positive correlation between consumers' consciousness and their knowledge on the ethical attributes, and their willingness to pay (Cordell, 1997).

Ethical consumption has gained popularity in recent years, Szmigin et al. (2009) posited that ethical consumption constitutes "positive choice behaviors such as the purchase of fairly traded or environmentally friendly products, and can involve avoidance and boycott of certain goods or companies". Ethical consumption encompasses a wide array of issues such as animal welfare, environmental, fair trade, human rights, fair wages, and self-interested health concerns (Carrigan et al., 2004).

Suitably, Harrison et al. (2005) defined the "ethical consumer" as one who may "have political, religious, spiritual, environmental, social or other motives for choosing one product over another". Increasingly, consumers are articulating their interest in ethical consumption. The burgeoning interest in ethical consumption among consumers can be attributed to some pertinent grounds such as heightened media coverage, proliferated levels of information, and increased availability of "alternative" products (Newholm and Shaw, 2007).

Consequently, many major brands are underscoring ethical dimensions as a crucial branding strategy. Accordingly, ethical consumption has percolated into the domain of fashion and ethical fashion is now in high demand (Domeisen, 2006). Apart from the industry's own efforts to promote ethical fashion consumption, several academic studies have been conducted in the context of ethical fashion, such as eco-conscious apparel consumption (Hiller Connell, 2011), purchase intention for apparel produced using recycled fibers (Hines and Swinker, 1996), consumers purchase intention for organic cotton apparel (Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009),

disposal of fashion clothing (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007), attitudes toward buying fashion counterfeit goods (Kim and Karpova, 2010), and ethical issues and consumer fashion purchase behavior (Joergens, 2006).

The expansion in global business, and the need for marketers to understand cross-cultural moral stances and values, has led to cross-cultural investigations which have shown significant differences between countries. Tylor provides one of the earliest definitions of culture: “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society” (McCort and Malhotra, 1993). Culture influences one’s behavior towards family, friends, work, education, consuming, etc (Yau, Chan, & Lau, 1999). Plenty of studies have shown that culture has influence on consumer behavior. It is a critical factor that international marketers cannot afford to ignore any longer. Without proper understanding of culture, the marketing effort may not be able to achieve great success. Culture forms the social norm, which greatly forms the behavior of people in the society. Hofstede’s framework is the most widely used national cultural framework in psychology, sociology, marketing, or management studies (Sondergaard, 1994; Steenkamp, 2001). He created five dimensions, assigned indexes on each to all nations, and linked the dimensions with demographic, geographic, economic, and political aspects of a society (Kale and Barnes, 1992), a feature unmatched by other frameworks. Consequently, Hofstede’s operationalization of cultures (1984) is the norm used in international marketing. Five dimensions are as follows:

- Individualism–collectivism, Uncertainty avoidance, Power distance, Masculinity–femininity and Long-term orientation. Among Hofstede’s dimensions, Triandis (1990) noted that the cultural dimension affecting social behavior most is the individualism–collectivism dimension. Individualism is more emphasized in western societies while collectivism is greatly appreciated in eastern societies. This dimension is frequently noted in consumer behavior literatures. The current study therefore examines consumers’ ethical choices based on collectivism factor.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the material content of the apparel they buy. Some are even investigating material suppliers, demanding that the fashion supply chain be transparent and ethical. Consumers’ concerns and beliefs about, knowledge of, and support for ethical issues can effectively enhance their reception of ethical fashion and shape their purchase behavior (Hill, 1981). Consumers are increasingly concerned about the social consequences of their purchases, especially in relation to the human rights violations in sweatshops (Dickson, 2001). In addition, sweatshop labor is consumers’ most important ethical concern when making apparel purchase decisions (Shaw and Tomolillo, 2004). Consumers’ knowledge about products and their relative ethical impacts are also major factors that contribute to ethical consumerism (Shim, 1995). The more consumers understand the ethical dimensions of products, the more likely they are to purchase those products (Dickson, 2001).

Product counterfeiting and piracy of either luxury consumer or industrial goods is a major global problem and is more acute in developing countries than in developed nations. Of serious concern is the fact that consumers, in general, do not perceive that their behavior is harmful to a particular industry or that it can lead to a social cost (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2008); they only perceive the social benefits of fake products. Consumers vary in their moral beliefs and social motives towards counterfeit consumption. More collectivist societies seem to put a lot of pressures on individuals to conform to the demand of others in the form of saving face or to be seen as one of the same kind (Wilcox et al., 2009). According to the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (a WTO agreement) counterfeits are any goods bearing an unauthorized trademark and thereby infringing the rights of the trademark owner under the law of the country of importation. The general public sometimes seems to use the terms piracy and counterfeit as similar, or the latter as more encompassing than the former (Eisend and Schuchert-Guller, 2006).

Counterfeit manufacturers, especially in emerging economies, get attracted to the business as they find little risk in return for a large profit. Slow judiciary processes, loopholes in laws and its enforcement, and low conviction rates and penalties (if any) allow counterfeiters to emerge and thrive (Riquelme et al, 2012). Thus, both the level economic development and the level of corruption have been linked to areas with increased levels of counterfeiting (Santos and Ribeiro, 2006). Why would it be interesting to examine beliefs and attitudes toward counterfeiting in Iran? Iran is an Islamic country and the dominant norms are Islamic, therefore it is forbidden to violate people’s rights, whether material or intellectual. In collectivism country like Iran, and an operating strict religious regime one would expect a greater unwillingness to purchase counterfeited products.

Major contributions addressing counterfeiting has come from researchers in various disciplines as reviewed, some focus on the supply-side (Alcock et al., 2003; Albers-Miller, 1999) and others on the demand-side (Tan, 2002; Gentry et al., 2006). Supply-side studies are concerned with production settings, the tactics and motives of illicit actors, and the ways in which their products enter the supply chain; while demand-side studies have

focused on consumer behavior and attitudes toward counterfeit products. Additionally, some researchers have studied legal and legislative concerns, and anti-counterfeiting options to enforce the intellectual property (IP) rights in the country of origin or in the respective market area to prevent – or at least to reduce – the availability of counterfeit goods (Nill and Shultz, 1996). Various anti-counterfeiting tactics have been suggested. Several factors, classified into four categories: person, product, social and cultural context, and purchase situation, have been posited to influence consumer attitude toward purchasing counterfeits (Eisend and Schuchert-Guller, 2006) and are developed below. Religiosity is also a factor that seems to influence perceptions of social consequences in a willingness to purchase counterfeits. More religious people are less able to rationalize the cost, price and quality effectiveness of counterfeits than their less religious counterparts (Vida, 2007). Consumers vary in their moral beliefs and social motives towards counterfeit consumption. More collectivist societies seem to put a lot of pressures on individuals to conform to the demand of others in the form of saving face or to be seen as one of the same kind (Wilcox et al., 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Fashion Consciousness

Fashion consciousness refers to the extent to which a consumer is caught up with fashion styles or clothing. Fashion items with a well-known brand are more prone to counterfeiting (Bloch et al., 1993). Fashionable life style, perceived socio-emotional values, perceived utility values, and perceived economic values have great impact on Chinese consumers to pay willingly for luxury brands (Li et. al, 2011). They have also reported that fashion consciousness doesn't have a positive effect on fake products' purchase intention (Femades, 2013).

H1: consumer's fashion consciousness has positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Subjective Norm

Social pressures, positioned on an individual by certain others, also play an important role in the purchase of counterfeits as they help in maintaining certain relationships. It is these social pressures that force consumers to perform certain acts to be able to gain approval in various social situations. Subjective norm explains a consumer's insight of the social pressures put forth on him/her in relation to the purchase of counterfeits. Social pressure can lead people to make or break rules, which means that support from relevant others of the (mis) behavior would either encourage involvement or not (Ang et al., 2001; Albers-Miller, 1999).

Researchers maintain that subjective norms affecting on one's attitude justify considerable variance of counterfeit purchase intention (Requelme et. al, 2012). These norms play critical role in counterfeit purchase intention (Femades, 2013). Consumers' willingness to buy fake luxury brands is tied with their social motives such as show-off (Wilcox et. al, 2009). Researchers have also stated that a good counterfeit product can be considered as a good substitute for luxury products as long as it assures social implications such as social status, economy, and conformity. Purchase and consumption process is entertaining and enjoyable since it is naturally an illegal act (Jiang & Cova, 2012).

H2. Consumer's Subjective norm has positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Ethical judgment

Consumer ethics can be defined as the moral rules, principles and standards that guide the behavior of an individual (or group) in the selection, purchase, use, or selling of goods, or services (Muncy and Vitell, 1992). Ethics consciousness can be conceptualised as a value that an individual holds and can be interpreted as an enduring belief (Schwartz, 1992). Ethical consciousness can take the form of ethical idealism, which refers to the person's moral philosophy which is rooted in an understanding of the inherent propriety of an action, regardless of its consequences (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2008). The other form of ethical consciousness is the ethical self-concept which refers to the self-perception of one being ethical. Both ethical idealism and ethical self-concept are used to gauge the ethical orientation of consumers. Moral judgments and consumer ethics have both been found to reduce purchase intentions of pirated software (Tan, 2002) and counterfeits (Maldonado and Hume, 2005). Researchers have recognized consumer's willingness to achieve, share, or use counterfeit products through a hedonic purchase experience and without any ethical concern about the fake product they buy (Chaudhry & Stumpf, 2011). Those consumers, who are more strictly ethical and are less materialistic, show less willingness for buying counterfeit products (Kozar & Marchetti). As well, ethical consciousness affecting on one's attitude, explains much variance of counterfeit consumption (Requelme & et. Al, 2012). In

another research it was found out though many consumers tend to pay for ethical products, still half of them are not willing to do so and there is a correlation between consumer's consciousness of ethical considerations and their tendency to pay more (Mai, 2014).

H3. Consumer's Ethical judgment has negative effect on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Value Consciousness

Value consciousness has been defined as a concern for paying lower prices, subject to some quality constraint (Ang et al., 2001) and has been found to have a positive influence on attitude towards piracy (Ang et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2005; Bloch et al., 1993).

Researchers argue that value consciousness affecting on one's attitude explains variance in counterfeit purchase intention (Requelme & et. Al, 2012). One more study concluded that value consciousness and norm sensitivities have less impact on fake product purchase intention in comparison with honesty and consumption conditions (Phau & Teah, 2009). Fake product purchase intention depends on consumer's outlook which is by itself influenced by perceived risk, previous consumers, and personal hedonism (Augusto et. al, 2007).

H4 consumer Value consciousness has positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Self-ambiguity

Self-ambiguity is based on the concept of self-identity which is the universal perception of "who" one is (Kaiser, 1990). Self-ambiguity defines how confident the individual is about who they are. Consumers who possess an unclear and insignificant self-concept usually have low self-esteem. As a result they believe that they will be unable to meet expectations of certain others (Campbell et al., 1991). In order to correct this ambiguity about themselves, consumers try to form a positive outlook towards things that in defining their personal and social character. Fashion brands aid in shaping up and polishing one's personality thus gaining recognition of the public. A negative significant relationship was pinpointed between self-evolved personal values and ethical fashion consumption (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). Self ambiguity is one of the key factors for counterfeit purchase intention (Femandes, 2013).

H5. Consumer's Self-ambiguity has positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Research Methodology

The questionnaire was distributed in shopping centers of Northern part of Tehran City since this district is occupied with plenty of European clothes brands which draw attention of any passerby. Massimo Dutti, Benetton, Zara etc... are among numerous authentic European brands which have preempted markets in the aforementioned area. Totally, 208 questionnaires were utilized. Since stores for different age groups and gender are found in those shopping centers, mall intercept technique was applied. Following Bush and Grant's (1995) suggestion, and in order to avoid bias in the outcomes, window shoppers were ignored but those potential buyers who left the store after purchase were chosen through systematic random sampling method. Once they gave consent, questionnaire was submitted to them and it only took them 5 minutes at most to complete it.

Questionnaire was composed of 5 demographic questions and 26 main questions. Demographic variables included sex, marital status, age, education, and income. 26 main questions were measured based on Likert five point scale (from item 1 totally disagree to item five totally agree).

Measurements

Fashion consciousness was measured by five scales suggested by Bruner and Hensel (1998). This scale measures consumer's engagement with relevant fashion. Statements such as; "smart clothing is very important to me", or "it is important for people to wear latest fashions" prove higher fashion consciousness of consumers. Some exemplary questions included in this scale are as follow; "I care about what others think about me", or "I am concerned to have a good effect on others". Participants rated the items to show how others' opinion about them was important to them.

Social norm was measured by a four item scale suggested by Bearden et.al to estimate how important one finds others' opinions. Some exemplary questions included in this scale are as follow; "I care about what others think about me", or "I am concerned to have a good effect on others". The highest score in this part indicates the highest appreciation one feels toward others' opinions about themselves.

Ethical judgment was measured by a three point scale to estimate consumer's ethical decision either to buy or avoid counterfeit consumption (Bian and Veloutsou, 2007; Spark et al., 1995). One example was; "I feel anxious after a counterfeit purchase". The highest score implied a more ethical consumer.

Value consciousness was measured by a four point scale so as to analyze how much people care about "value of money" (Lichtenstein et al., 1990). Questions such as "while shopping, I seek the highest quality", or "while shopping, I compare price labels of my favorite brand" were included and the highest score meant more attention to the price-quality relationship.

Self ambiguity was measured on a six point scale to define the self confidence of consumers (Cambell et al., 1996). Questions such as; "sometimes I feel I am not what I look". The highest score for some questions of this part showed low self confidence of the consumer.

Counterfeit purchase intention was measured by a two point scale; 1- if I have the opportunity to buy fake products, I will not miss that; 2- I am interested in buying fake product in near future (Fernandes, 2012).

Result

Research data was gathered from a sample totaling 208 persons through distribution of questionnaire. The conceptual model was made up of one dependent and five independent variables. Since the present study investigates the impact of independent variables on dependent variable, regression analysis is the most appropriate method for hypothesis testing and its analysis. There are four principal assumptions for a linear regression to be justifiable. Normality of the variable distribution, co linearity of the relationship between dependent and independent variable, constant variance of variables, lack of multi-collinearity and lack of autocorrelation in data.

Item measurement scale is relative but it has changed into interval scale by extracting average of multiple responses and the relationship between independent and dependent variable is linear. Though variable distribution is not normal, regarding the large size of sample and no severe skewness, lack of this assumption is justifiable. Linear relationship between independent and dependent variables is supported since Fisher value of model coefficient is bigger than t value and significance level is lower than 0.05. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were applied for investigating the distribution of variables and it was found that variables don't have normal distribution. Model residual plot shows a half-normal distribution. Residual plot with fit values didn't support any special pattern of heteroscedasticity. Tolerance of independent variables was near 1 and variance inflation factor was lower than 2, which has supported lack of colinearity of independent variables. Since necessary assumptions for applying regression analysis were supported, it is reliable to be used for analysis of extracted outcomes. Model's multi-collinearity coefficient was 0.44 and model's coefficient of determination was 0.193. Estimated t value for each of five independent variables was bigger than absolute value of 1.96 which indicates independent variables leave significant impact on counterfeit brand purchase intention. It was revealed that fashion consciousness, social norm, value consciousness, and self ambiguity have direct and significant effect on higher counterfeit brand purchase intention but ethical judgment has indirect impact on fake brand purchase intention. Standardized coefficients of independent variables show that respectively ethical judgment, social norm, fashion consciousness, value consciousness, and self ambiguity have the highest impact on counterfeit brand purchase intention. Coefficient of determination showed that 19% of counterfeit brand purchase intention is determinable by five independent variables. As a natural consequence, higher fashion consciousness, higher social norm, higher value consciousness, and higher self ambiguity will result in counterfeit purchase intention and lower ethical judgment will increase fake product purchase intention refer to table 1

Table1 regression analysis result

Independent variables	Non standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t statistics	P value	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Standard error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Constant coefficient	1.181	.605		1.953	.052		
Fashion consciousness	.254	.085	.196	2.982	.003	.920	1.086

Social norm	.250	.091	.200	2.759	.006	.757	1.322
Ethical judgment	-.419	.089	-.315	-4.711	.000	.895	1.118
Value consciousness	.221	.085	.167	2.584	.010	.956	1.046
Self ambiguity	.221	.105	.142	2.099	.037	.871	1.148
R=.440, R Square=.193, Adjusted R Square=.173, Std. Error of the Estimate=.85229, (F=9.677, P=0.001)							

Research Findings

Counterfeit and piracy is a global problem and it is even tangible in countries of free trade. Iran's case is however different. Once sanctions were imposed, most brands lost their official agencies in Iran and were smuggled through Turkey and Emirates to be sold in Iran. Clothes' tariffs to be imported through official customs are too high to be changed drastically even after abolishment of sanctions. Probably, just a slight reduction may happen in transportation expenses. Such problems plus Chinese products as main Iranian products' rivals, and two groups of customers – either those who could not afford expensive commodities or those who merely seek certain brands- all welcome fake products arrival.

According to the outcomes, some strategies are recommended for refrain from counterfeit apparel consumption. On the first place, dangers of buying fake clothes and damages it can incur upon original product manufacturers must be hinted so that subjective norms change and acceptability of these items in society reduce. Iran's regime is a religious one; so it can rely on ethical-religious standards and announce that counterfeit apparel purchase is not ethical. On the other hand, the merits of original products such as high quality and durability can be invested in and advertised about. Comparing values of original brands against the fake ones via informative advertisements is another strategy for increasing public willingness for original goods. Last but not least, one way to reduce fake products' demands is improving the welfare and the level of society. Since majority of Iran's economy is nationalized, pertinent administrators of state and private organizations must pave the way for better collaboration of domestic and foreign manufacturers to improve the welfare and the level of life in the society.

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