PURCHASERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS COUNTERFEIT ITEMS - A SURVEY
STUDY OF NAGERCOIL TOWN IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine the proliferation of counterfeit goods, investigate consumer attitudes towards these products, and identify the factors influencing their purchase decisions in the context of Nagercoil city, Tamilnadu, India.

Theoretical Framework: The research draws upon theories from previous studies, focusing on understanding the dynamics of counterfeiting in the contemporary consumer market. The theory is built on the relationship between consumers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes and behaviors towards counterfeit goods.

Method: The research methodology involves a structured survey conducted with 193 respondents. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 20.0, and the Chi-Square Test was deployed to determine relationships between demographic characteristics and attitudes towards counterfeit goods.

Results and Conclusion: The study found significant differences in customers' perceptions of counterfeits across demographic subgroups. Male consumers were found to be more ethically aligned, while the female segment showed a higher propensity to purchase counterfeits due to influences from friends or previous purchases.

Implications of the research: This research exposes the challenges posed by counterfeits, offering critical insights for businesses, regulatory bodies, and consumers. It underscores the need for stringent regulations and awareness initiatives to combat the issue of counterfeiting.

Originality/Value: This study adds value by presenting new evidence from a less-studied geographical area and demonstrating the influence of demographic characteristics on attitudes towards counterfeits. It makes a significant contribution to the discourse on counterfeits and consumer behavior.

Keywords: Counterfeit Goods, Consumer Attitude, Purchasing Behavior, Demographic Characteristics, Regulatory Frameworks, Ethical Purchasing.

ATITUDE DOS COMPRADORES EM RELAÇÃO A ITENS FALSIFICADOS - UM ESTUDO DE PESQUISA NA CIDADE DE NAGERCOIL EM TAMILNADU

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é examinar a proliferação de produtos falsificados, investigar as atitudes dos consumidores em relação a esses produtos e identificar os fatores que influenciam suas decisões de compra no contexto da cidade de Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, Índia.

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Estrutura teórica: A pesquisa baseia-se em teorias de estudos anteriores, com foco na compreensão da dinâmica da falsificação no mercado consumidor contemporâneo. A teoria é construída com base na relação entre as características demográficas dos consumidores e suas atitudes e comportamentos em relação a produtos falsificados.

Método: A metodologia de pesquisa envolve uma pesquisa estruturada realizada com 193 entrevistados. Os dados coletados foram analisados com o SPSS 20.0, e o teste qui-quadrado foi aplicado para determinar as relações entre as características demográficas e as atitudes em relação aos produtos falsificados.

Resultados e conclusões: O estudo encontrou diferenças significativas nas percepções dos clientes em relação às falsificações entre os subgrupos demográficos. Os consumidores do sexo masculino foram considerados mais alinhados com a ética, enquanto o segmento feminino mostrou uma maior propensão a comprar produtos falsificados devido a influências de amigos ou compras anteriores.

Implicações da pesquisa: Esta pesquisa expõe os desafios apresentados pelas falsificações, oferecendo percepções críticas para empresas, órgãos reguladores e consumidores. Ela ressalta a necessidade de regulamentações rigorosas e iniciativas de conscientização para combater o problema da falsificação.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo agrega valor ao apresentar novas evidências de uma área geográfica menos estudada e ao demonstrar a influência das características demográficas nas atitudes em relação às falsificações. É uma contribuição significativa para o discurso sobre falsificações e comportamento do consumidor.


1 INTRODUCTION

The growing prevalence of counterfeit goods in today's global marketplace represents a significant concern for both industry stakeholders and consumers. Counterfeit products, often indistinguishable from genuine goods in appearance and packaging, pose a substantial threat to the profitability and reputation of established brands. Furthermore, these forged products, typically made from inferior materials and lacking in quality, can pose health and safety risks to the consumer, adding an ethical dimension to the problem. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that these goods are often sold unwittingly by retailers or purchased unintentionally by consumers, due to misinformation, lack of awareness, or the convincing similarities to original products.

Counterfeiting is not only a high-profit illicit trade but also a reflection of the evolving dynamics of consumer markets. This illegal practice raises several questions around the consumer attitudes and behaviors driving the demand for counterfeit goods. What influences a consumer's decision to buy a counterfeit item? How significant is the role of demographic factors in shaping these decisions? Are consumers aware of the implications of their purchase on the broader economy and the original product manufacturers? Addressing these questions could pave the way for effective countermeasures against the proliferation of counterfeit goods.

From a theoretical standpoint, understanding the dynamics of counterfeit goods within the consumer market requires us to delve deeper into consumer attitudes and behaviors. Existing research provides a rich foundation upon which this study builds, exploring the interplay between consumers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards counterfeit goods. By extending this theoretical framework to a less-studied geographical area, Nagercoil city,
Tamilnadu, India, we aim to broaden the understanding of this phenomenon in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The practical implications of this research are significant, providing valuable insights for businesses, regulatory bodies, and consumers alike. For businesses, understanding the consumer demand for counterfeit goods can inform strategies for brand protection and competitive positioning. Regulatory bodies may benefit from this research by gaining a better understanding of the prevalence and drivers of counterfeit goods trade, which can inform policy-making and enforcement efforts. Lastly, for consumers, this research offers an opportunity to reflect on their purchasing behaviors and the broader consequences of their decisions.

In summary, this study aims to investigate the proliferation of counterfeit goods, explore consumer attitudes towards these products, and identify the factors influencing their purchase decisions. By employing a structured survey approach within the context of Nagercoil city, Tamilnadu, India, we hope to contribute new evidence to the discourse on counterfeits and consumer behavior, providing theoretical and practical insights that can help address this pervasive issue.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the proliferation of counterfeit goods and consumer attitudes towards these products, with a specific focus on the factors influencing their purchase decisions. The study aims to investigate the dynamics of counterfeiting in the contemporary consumer market and explore the underlying motivations that drive individuals to purchase counterfeit items. It also seeks to analyze the impact of demographic characteristics on consumers' perceptions of counterfeits.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the overall attitude of consumers towards purchasing counterfeit products.
- To gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and mechanisms behind consumers' decisions to buy fake goods.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's generation, one of the major dilemmas faced by industries is counterfeiting. It has been observed that various products in the market have the same appearance, packaging, and colors, among other similarities. Additionally, counterfeit items often have minor alterations in their product tags. For instance, "Adidas" may be replaced with "Abidas," or "Lifebuoy" may be changed to "Lifejoy." The production of such forged items is considered a crime since they involve attaching tags of the original products without authorization. According to Grossman and Shapiro (1998), the production of counterfeit products refers to the unauthorized replication of established brands, using their brand names. At times, individuals may unintentionally purchase or consume counterfeit items due to lack of awareness, misinformation from shopkeepers, or the presence of similar products on shelves in shopping complexes or outlets.

Counterfeiting has become a highly profitable practice in today's markets. Essentially, counterfeiting involves creating replicas of products that have the same appearance, packaging, and brand names as authentic items. However, counterfeit products utilize cheaper materials and standards during production. Lai and Zaichkowsky (1999) defined counterfeit products as fake replicas of branded items. It is important to note that counterfeit products are illegal to sell,
typically priced lower than genuine products, and often of inferior quality compared to the original branded items available in the market.

Cordell et al. (1996) described these counterfeit items as duplicates of products whose intellectual property rights are protected. This perspective was also supported by Chaudhary et al. (2005). Additionally, the term "counterfeit product," as defined by Ha and Lennon (2006), refers to a product that has been illegally replicated to appear identical to the genuine product. Counterfeit products often employ low-quality materials, making them cheap, readily available, and potentially hazardous to consumers. Counterfeiting poses a significant challenge for high-end, branded consumer goods, including proprietary foods, medications, cosmetics, computer accessories, phone accessories, electrical appliances, toys, clothing, watches, and leather goods. It is likely that people worldwide are unknowingly buying and selling counterfeit items without fully realizing the implications.

Ang, Cheng, and Tambyah (2001) conducted a study focusing on consumer behavior towards counterfeit items. They examined the perceptions of consumers who purchase counterfeit goods and explored the reasons behind their buying decisions. By analyzing consumer perspectives, the authors aimed to gain insights into the motivations driving the demand for counterfeit products.

Albers-Miller (1999) provided an overview of consumer behavior related to illegal goods, including counterfeit items. The author emphasized the significant influence of social, personal, and economic factors on consumer choices when it comes to counterfeit goods. The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape consumer behavior in relation to counterfeits.

Bian and Moutinho (2009) conducted research to identify the factors that influence consumers' consideration of purchasing counterfeit items. Through their study, they highlighted social influence, perceived risk, and value for money as key determinants impacting consumers' intentions to buy counterfeits. The authors aimed to contribute to the understanding of consumer decision-making processes in relation to counterfeit purchases.

Wilcox, Kim, and Sen (2009) focused specifically on counterfeit luxury brands and aimed to investigate the motivations behind consumer choices in this context. Their research revealed that social status and the desire for luxury were crucial factors motivating consumers to opt for counterfeit luxury products. The study aimed to shed light on the specific motivations driving consumers to purchase counterfeit luxury brands.

Bloch, Bush, and Campbell (1993) explored the concept of consumer complicity in the counterfeit market. Their research aimed to understand why consumers intentionally purchase counterfeit products and the underlying factors that motivate such behavior. By examining consumer perspectives and motivations, the authors aimed to provide insights into the complex dynamics of counterfeit consumption.

Phau, Teah, and Lee (2009) focused on analyzing the attitudes of Singaporean consumers towards counterfeit luxury brands. They found that perceived value, perceived risk, and attitudes towards counterfeiting significantly influenced consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeit items. The study aimed to enhance understanding of consumer attitudes and intentions related to counterfeit luxury brands.

Tan (2002) delved into the ethical considerations that consumers take into account when deciding to purchase pirated software, a form of counterfeit goods. The study explored how ethical values shape attitudes and intentions towards counterfeit purchases, shedding light on the ethical dimensions of consumer behavior in the context of counterfeit products.

De Matos, Ituassu, and Rossi (2007) provided a comprehensive overview of studies related to consumer attitudes towards counterfeit items. Their work extended the understanding of consumer behavior by suggesting a framework that encompassed the antecedents and...
consequences related to counterfeit purchases. The authors aimed to offer a holistic view of the factors influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors towards counterfeits.

Eisend and Schuchert-Güler (2006) conducted a literature review to examine existing studies on why consumers purchase counterfeit goods. In addition, they provided predictions about future trends in the field. The authors aimed to contribute to the understanding of consumer behavior regarding counterfeit purchases and provide insights into potential future developments.

Grossman and Shapiro (1988) presented a theoretical framework for understanding the demand for counterfeit goods. They discussed the impact of counterfeit goods on the market for genuine status goods and how firms respond to this competition. The study aimed to provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing the dynamics between counterfeit and genuine products.

Wee, Tan, and Cheok (1995) explored non-price factors that influence consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeit goods. They investigated the roles of social influence, product attributes, and situational variables in shaping consumers' decisions regarding counterfeit purchases. The study aimed to shed light on the complex interplay of various factors in consumer decision-making related to counterfeit items.

Cordell, Wongtada, and Kieschnick (1996) examined the role of legal attitudes and product characteristics in counterfeit purchase intentions. They concluded that these two factors significantly influence consumer willingness to buy counterfeit goods. The study aimed to provide insights into the specific factors that impact consumer choices regarding counterfeit purchases.

Penz and Stöttinger (2005) developed an explanatory model for the voluntary purchase of counterfeit products. They proposed that individual factors such as price-value perception, risk aversion, and ethical considerations influence consumer behavior in relation to counterfeits. The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping consumer decisions to purchase counterfeit goods.

Staake, Thiesse, and Fleisch (2009) comprehensively explored the emergence of counterfeit trade from a marketing perspective. Their research offered insights into consumer behavior, supply chain strategies, and the impacts of counterfeiting on different industries. The study aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted aspects of counterfeiting and its implications across various sectors.

Sharma and Chan (2011) developed a scale for measuring consumers' proneness to counterfeiting. Their scale helped in understanding the key factors that make certain consumers more likely to purchase counterfeit goods than others. The study aimed to contribute to the field by providing a tool for assessing consumer tendencies towards counterfeiting and identifying influential factors.

Shabani & Govender (2023). In this analysis of the relevant literature, we look at how ethical instruction affects inventive behaviour and the various aspects it can take. By contrasting ethical leadership with autocratic methods, the theoretical framework highlights the importance of leaders' actions in defining the culture of their organisations. The study takes a quantitative method, surveying 160 managers at various levels (from middle to executive) and roles (from supervisor to subordinate). The results show that ethical leadership has a beneficial effect on employees' creative actions, such as employees' propensity to engage in concept exploration, idea development, and idea advocating. There is a growing demand for ethical leadership in the wake of corporate governance disasters, and this analysis underlines both that need and our current lack of knowledge on the impact of ethical leadership on employee creativity within South African state-owned firms. As a result of the research, these organisations will have better leadership practises and a more innovative culture, which will boost their overall performance.

Schreiber, Hupffer & Gayer (2022). Through a theoretical examination, this study of the literature seeks to establish a link between the effect of advertising on the sense of obsolescence
and the effectiveness of advertising. There are two chapters covering the theoretical foundation; the first introduces the reader to the notion of Planned Obsolescence and its primary forms. Because of its hermeneutic and interpretive methodology, this evaluation falls under the purview of the social sciences. The results show that humankind's social and behavioural shifts, which encourage individual rivalry, undermine social bonds, and increase the desire for individual validation, provide support for the phenomena of programmed obsolescence.

3 METHODOLOGY

Need and Scope: Due to the abundance of substitutes in today's consumer market, businesses face several distinct marketing challenges. Companies often identify opportunities to profit from selling replicas of popular products, which can result in a decline in consumer confidence and sales of the original items.

Sample Size: The sample was collected from the city of Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu. A total of 193 individuals were selected, comprising 98 females and 95 males.

Data Collection: The initial data was gathered through a survey method. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed following a pilot survey. Out of the 260 distributed questionnaires, 200 were returned, with 7 deemed unusable due to incorrect responses. This resulted in a participation of 193 individuals in the study.

Instruments for Data Collection: For this study, researchers utilized a standardized questionnaire developed by Angela Cuno in 2008. The questionnaire consists of three sections: general customer attitudes towards counterfeit products, purchasing behavior related to fake items, and buyer characteristics. A five-point Likert scale (ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree') was employed to assess typical attitudes and purchasing tendencies regarding counterfeit goods. Additionally, 'Yes,' 'No,' and 'Can't Say' options were used to understand consumers' attitudes and decisions regarding the purchase of counterfeit products. The demographic profile data included respondents' gender, age, education level, income, and current occupation. The SPSS 20.0 software was employed for data analysis and to extract meaningful insights from the collected data.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spending money on fake goods is a sign of financial responsibility.</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.012*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying fake goods is the same as stealing from the company that made the real item.</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying fake goods is illegal.</td>
<td>0.078**</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The counterfeit industry has no negative effects on the economy.</td>
<td>0.239**</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeit products display initiative and originality.</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The production company suffers a loss due to the sale of counterfeit products.</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small enterprises selling counterfeit goods compete with multinational conglomerates.</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A well-made fake can fool anyone.</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would still choose to buy knockoffs instead of authentic items.</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purchasers Attitude Towards Counterfeit Items - A Survey Study of Nagercoil Town in Tamilnadu

High-end brands charge exorbitant rates for their products. 0.006* 0.001* 0.000* 0.001* 0.000*
The purchase of counterfeit goods is one method of retaliation against careless and unfair merchants. 0.000* 0.000* 0.061** 0.000* 0.000*
It is a crime to traffic in fake goods. 0.000* 0.000* 0.000* 0.000* 0.000*
The disapproval of my loved ones would prevent me from making any fraudulent purchases. 0.000* 0.000* 0.000* 0.000* 0.000*
In the past, I gave in to the pressure of my friends and purchased counterfeit goods. 0.011* 0.008* 0.000* 0.000* 0.000*

*(p <0.05) indicates statistical significance at 5%, and ** indicates non-significance.
Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The above table 1 provides information about the relationship between different demographic variables (Gender, Education, Profession, Age, Income) and attitudes toward counterfeit products. Each row represents a particular attitude or belief about counterfeit products, while each column represents a demographic factor. The p-values given in the cells indicate whether there is a significant association between each pair of variables (the belief and the demographic factor).

"Spending money on fake goods is a sign of financial responsibility." This statement is statistically significant for all demographic factors at the 5% level except for age which is marginally significant (p = 0.012), indicating that these variables play a significant role in shaping people's beliefs about the financial responsibility of buying counterfeit goods.

"Buying fake goods is the same as stealing from the company that made the real item." This statement is statistically significant for all demographic factors, suggesting these factors significantly influence the perception that purchasing counterfeit goods is akin to stealing from the original manufacturer.

"Buying fake goods is illegal." This belief shows significant association with all demographic factors except gender (p = 0.078), which indicates a non-significant association. This suggests that gender doesn't significantly influence whether individuals perceive buying counterfeit goods as illegal.

"The counterfeit industry has no negative effects on the economy." There's a non-significant association with gender (p = 0.239), indicating that gender doesn't play a significant role in this belief. However, all other demographic factors are significantly associated with this belief.

For the remaining statements, all demographic factors are significant at the 5% level, implying a strong association between these factors and the respective attitudes toward counterfeit products.

Gender, education, profession, age, and income all appear to play a significant role in shaping individuals' beliefs and attitudes towards counterfeit goods, although the degree of influence varies with the specific belief. However, gender seems to have less influence on the belief about the legality and the economic effects of counterfeiting compared to other demographic factors.

Table 2: Indicators of customer purchase behavior vs the prevalence of counterfeit goods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last year, you have likely made at least one purchase of counterfeit items.</td>
<td>.159**</td>
<td>.009*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.037*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given the chance, consumers will buy fake items.</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tell us how often you have purchased fake goods. | .008* | .000* | .000* | .003* | .000* |
Estimate your likelihood of purchasing a fake within the next six months. | .000* | .000* | .000* | .000* | .000* |

Noticeable at the 5% level (p<0.05), where * indicates significance at the 5% level and ** indicates non-significance.

Source: Prepared by authors (2023)

The table is presenting the relationship between different demographic variables (Gender, Education, Income, Age, Profession) and behaviors related to the purchase of counterfeit goods. Each row stands for a certain behavior related to counterfeit goods, and each column stands for a demographic variable. The p-values given in the cells signify whether there is a statistically significant association between each pair of variables (the behavior and the demographic factor).

"In the last year, you have likely made at least one purchase of counterfeit items." For this behavior, all variables show a significant association at the 5% level, except for gender (p = 0.159) which shows a non-significant association. This indicates that the likelihood of purchasing counterfeit items in the past year is significantly influenced by education, income, age, and profession, but not gender.

"When given the chance, consumers will buy fake items." This statement shows a significant association with all demographic factors, suggesting these factors play a major role in the propensity of consumers to buy counterfeit goods when presented with an opportunity.

"Tell us how often you have purchased fake goods." This behavior is significantly associated with all demographic variables. This indicates that gender, education, income, age, and profession significantly influence the frequency of counterfeit goods purchases.

"Estimate your likelihood of purchasing a fake within the next six months." All demographic factors show a significant association with this statement, indicating that these factors strongly influence the likelihood of consumers purchasing counterfeit goods in the near future.

Demographic factors such as education, income, age, and profession significantly influence consumer behaviors related to the purchase of counterfeit goods. Gender, however, seems to have less influence on the likelihood of having made a counterfeit purchase in the past year compared to other demographic factors. These findings may guide interventions aiming at reducing the prevalence of counterfeit goods.

### 4.1 Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis, the following findings can be drawn from the study:

The disposition of a buyer is a crucial factor in determining their actions. The consumer's outlook significantly influences their decision to purchase counterfeit goods. Demographic values exhibit a strong correlation with counterfeits, suggesting a considerable number of people enjoy buying such goods. It is worth noting that a person's career may not reliably predict their inclination to purchase knockoff items.

The Chi-square test was utilized to examine whether respondents' gender had any impact on their purchasing decisions, and the results indicated that gender did indeed play a role. The findings revealed that 49% of female respondents bought fake goods, while only 38% of male respondents engaged in such purchases. This suggests that male shoppers are comparatively more ethical than their female counterparts.

Both male and female respondents demonstrated distinct influences on their likelihood of purchasing counterfeit goods. Male customers were primarily motivated by the lower price of counterfeit products, whereas female customers were influenced by past purchases or...
recommendations from friends, family members, and coworkers who are also consumers of counterfeit products."

**Proliferation of Counterfeit Goods:** The study identifies counterfeiting as a major challenge faced by industries globally. The production and consumption of counterfeit goods have increased, influenced by factors such as lack of awareness among consumers, misinformation from retailers, and the presence of similar-looking counterfeit goods in the market.

**Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Decisions:** Consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit goods and their purchasing decisions significantly vary based on demographic characteristics. While male consumers showed more ethical alignment, female consumers exhibited a higher likelihood to purchase counterfeit goods, influenced by friends or previous purchases.

**Influence of Demographic Characteristics:** The demographic variables, including gender, education, income, age, and profession, significantly affect attitudes towards counterfeit goods. However, gender shows a less significant effect on the likelihood of making a counterfeit purchase in the past year compared to other demographic factors.

**Significance of Social Influence, Perceived Risk, and Value for Money:** The research also indicates that factors such as social influence, perceived risk, and value for money are significant determinants affecting consumers' intentions to buy counterfeits.

**Perception of Counterfeit Goods:** Consumer perceptions of counterfeit goods significantly differ across different demographic groups. Most respondents acknowledge the negative effects of counterfeit products on the economy and original product manufacturers, except for the belief that "buying fake goods is illegal," where the association with gender is not significant, and the statement "the counterfeit industry has no negative effects on the economy," where the association with gender is not significant.

**Frequency of Counterfeit Purchases:** Consumers' frequency of counterfeit purchases and their likelihood of buying fake items in the next six months significantly depend on their demographic characteristics.

**Necessity of Regulatory Measures:** The findings highlight the necessity of stringent regulations and awareness initiatives to curb the prevalence of counterfeit goods.

**Geographical Specificity:** The study offers new insights into consumer behavior towards counterfeit goods in a less-studied geographical area - Nagercoil city, Tamilnadu, India.

### 5 CONCLUSION

Addressing our initial research question, we examined the consumer's outlook on counterfeit goods and their purchasing decisions. It became clear that various demographic characteristics, such as gender, income, and profession, significantly influence their attitudes towards counterfeit goods. Notably, we found that male consumers tend to lean more towards ethical purchasing decisions, while female consumers are more likely to buy counterfeit products, primarily influenced by their social circle and previous experiences.

These findings have notable implications for both society and academia. For society, the understanding of the underlying factors influencing consumer behavior can aid in formulating effective strategies to curb the spread of counterfeit goods. Consumer education and awareness campaigns tailored to the demographic characteristics can be an effective tool in altering purchasing habits. On the other hand, for academia, this research expands the existing literature on counterfeit goods and consumer behavior, particularly in the context of Nagercoil city, Tamilnadu, India, a previously less-studied area.

However, we must acknowledge the limitations of this research. The data was collected from a specific geographic location, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Similarly, the study did not delve into the perspectives of counterfeit goods sellers, an essential
aspect of the counterfeit goods problem. Moreover, the study focused on the consumer's perspective, and did not address the role of original manufacturers and brands in curbing counterfeiting.

Building upon the findings of this study, future research could expand its geographical scope to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, it would be beneficial to investigate the motivations and strategies of counterfeit goods sellers. Additionally, further research could delve into the role of brands and original manufacturers in curbing the proliferation of counterfeit goods. Lastly, more emphasis could be placed on understanding the effectiveness of interventions tailored to specific demographic characteristics in curbing the prevalence of counterfeit goods.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Consumer Education: The study revealed that consumers have varying degrees of understanding about the negative effects of counterfeits on the economy and the original manufacturers. There's a need for comprehensive educational programs that inform consumers about the implications of purchasing counterfeit goods. This education could include information about the legal aspects, the potential harm to the consumer due to inferior quality, and the effects on the economy and genuine businesses.

Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks: Regulatory bodies should enforce stricter rules and laws to crack down on the production and distribution of counterfeit goods. This can involve increasing penalties for counterfeit production and sales, enhancing the capacities of customs and enforcement agencies to identify and seize counterfeit goods, and encouraging businesses to protect their intellectual property rights.

Increase Ethical Awareness: The study found that male consumers were more ethically aligned, suggesting a potential role for ethical education in influencing attitudes towards counterfeits. It could be beneficial to develop campaigns and initiatives that promote ethical consumption, emphasizing the damage done to companies and workers by the counterfeit trade.

Tailoring Interventions by Demographic Characteristics: As the study found significant differences in perceptions and behavior across demographic subgroups, interventions could be designed and tailored according to these characteristics. For example, since female consumers were found to be more influenced by friends or previous purchases, social media campaigns could target these influencers to curb counterfeit purchases.

Collaboration with Brands: Brands can play a pivotal role in the fight against counterfeits by improving their product authentication methods, educating their consumers about counterfeits, and working closely with regulatory bodies. Brands should be encouraged to offer genuine products at competitive prices to discourage consumers from buying counterfeits.

Research on Counterfeit Sellers: Future research could focus on the sellers of counterfeit goods to understand their motivations and strategies. This could inform targeted interventions to discourage the supply of counterfeit products.

Supporting Legitimate Small Businesses: As the study mentioned, small enterprises selling counterfeit goods are competing with multinational conglomerates. A broader economic approach may be to support the development of legitimate small businesses, offering them alternatives to selling counterfeit products.

Further Research in Other Geographical Areas: This study has provided valuable insights from a less-studied geographical area. However, the phenomenon of counterfeit goods is global, and further research in other areas could help to understand whether the attitudes and behaviors found in this study are common across different regions.
REFERENCES


