



Counterfeit Product Purchase: Impact of Religiosity or Materialism

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Abstract

The article studies the relationship between influencing consumer behavior (religiosity and physical behavior as independent variables) and consumer attitudes and intentions to buy counterfeit products as dependent variables. The study focused on a critical issue: the ethical considerations of customers, gender, and religious beliefs that influence customers' purchasing decisions to acquire counterfeit goods. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to create a questionnaire and sample 300 participants who had recently purchased counterfeit products. The Turkish markets in the cities of Istanbul and Samsun were chosen as a community to select the study sample to test the main hypotheses of the study (the existence of an inverse relationship between materialism and the influence on opinion and customer behavior in purchasing counterfeit goods). Moreover, an individual's attitude toward purchasing counterfeit goods influences the relationship between materialism, religion, and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, an individual's attitude toward buying counterfeit goods affects the relationship between materialism, religion, and behavioral intentions; accordingly, gender and buyback plans have a strong link. religion, materialism, counterfeit commodity, behavioral considerations.

Keywords: (religion, materialism, counterfeit commodity, behavioral considerations)



شراء المنتجات المقلدة: تأثير الدين أو المادية

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المستخلص

تدرس المقالة العلاقة بين التأثير على سلوك المستهلك الدين والسلوك الجسدي كمتغيرات مستقلة (ومواقف المستهلكين ونواياهم لشراء المنتجات المقلدة كمتغيرات تابعة). ركزت الدراسة على قضية حاسمة: الاعتبارات الأخلاقية للعملاء والجنس والمعتقدات الدينية التي تؤثر على قرارات الشراء للعملاء للحصول على السلع المقلدة. تم استخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS) لإنشاء استبيان وعينة من 300 مشارك اشتركوا مؤخراً بمنتجات مقلدة. تم اختيار الأسواق التركية في اسطنبول وسامسون كمجتمع لاختيار عينة الدراسة لاختبار الفرضيات الرئيسية للدراسة أكدت الدراسة على وجود علاقة عكسية بين المادية والتأثير على رأي وسلوك العملاء في شراء السلع المقلدة. (علاوة على ذلك، يؤثر موقف الفرد تجاه شراء السلع المقلدة على العلاقة بين المادية والدين والنوايا السلوكية. علاوة على ذلك، يؤثر موقف الفرد تجاه شراء السلع المقلدة على العلاقة بين المادية والدين والنوايا السلوكية. وعليه، فإن هناك ارتباطاً قوياً بين الجنس وخطط إعادة الشراء. الدين، والمادية، والسلع المقلدة، والاعتبارات السلوكية.

الكلمات المفتاحية (الدين، المادية، السلع المقلدة، الاعتبارات السلوكية)



1. Research Background:

The Global Trademark Organization described counterfeiting as "something that is not authentic as well as being reproduction and imitation intended to be carried as approved and authentic." Such devices are produced illegally because unauthorized organizations move ahead to duplicate quality goods and manufacture counterfeit items without the authorization of the authorized and innovative corporation (Elsantil and Hamza, 2021). Increased counterfeit goods in the worldwide export industry cause various issues all over the world, and this issue is becoming more serious as counterfeit goods switch from basic products, including footwear and shoulder bags, to various chemicals like medications and pesticides. Without hesitation, this change is critical since using counterfeit industrial chemicals can lead to serious health and safety concerns (Souiden, Ladhari, and Zarrouk Amri, 2018).



The goal of making an investment in brand advancement is to establish an individuality all over which items become recognized and appreciated by clients, resulting in client commitment. Successfully branded goods typically command a greater market rate because the customer has begun to accept that a specific brand symbolizes improved performance, distinguishing qualities, fashion, and/or excellent service. Indeed, global and national brands are the primary generators of wealth (Harun et al., 2020). Regrettably, the success of a branded product (BP) can lead to counterfeiting to the point where competing options could seem inseparable from the existing brand. Counterfeits are defined as products that are usually a trademark that is similar to, or unrecognizable from, a trademark enrolled to some other group, thereby intruding on the privileges of the trademark holder.

Counterfeiting has been around for a long time, but it has only become a serious concern for genuine vendors since the 1970s. Even though counterfeiting is



impermissible in a few states, including the United States and the United Kingdom, clear and specific data on the quantity of counterfeiting commerce are unreachable. Even so, worldwide sales of counterfeit goods are estimated to be around \$300 billion, as well as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry claims that counterfeits account for 8% of economic globalization. No item category escapes unharmed (Patiro and Sihombing, 2016). Contrary to popular belief, counterfeiting has become a considerable financial occurrence. The vast majority of counterfeit products discovered in customs originated in Hong Kong and China. Some other main countries include the UAE, Singapore, India, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Thailand. The percentage of counterfeit product-producing countries is presented in Figure 1, where China dominates the world by producing more counterfeit products, followed by Turkey, Singapore, Thailand, India, Morocco, the UAE, Pakistan, and Egypt.

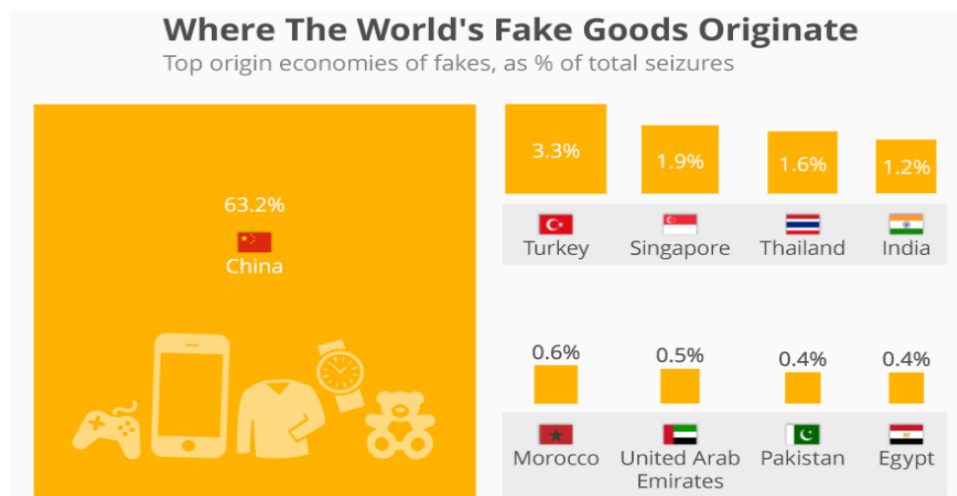


figure 1: Percentage of Counterfeit products originates from.

According to past studies, approximately one-third of customers will indeed willfully buy counterfeit items. Because supply has always been the primary driver of the industry, several researchers have also tried to argue that customer usage of counterfeits is among the primary reasons for the counterfeiting phenomenon's presence and economic expansion. As a consequence of this reasoning, much investigation has been conducted to



recognize major factors that affect customer preference for counterfeits (Quoquab et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the basic problem with research examining why customers willfully buy counterfeits is that such researchers have typically declined to take fundamental brand elements into consideration, despite the reality that the decision to purchase a counterfeit product represents both a product choice judgment and a brand decision.

1.1 Effects of Counterfeit Good Quality

Counterfeit item effectiveness relates to substantial illustrative better products that can be traced back to various specifications, including appealing pictures, technological and functional areas, and design features. The value of counterfeits could now be enhanced to outstanding levels thanks to technological advancements. As a consequence, there are many branded counterfeits in the industry that seem to be similar to the previous ones. According to the typology of products, consumers' inclination toward counterfeits increases if they experience or can analyze the success of the goods, implying that enhanced counterfeit performance may entice customers to purchase or proceed to purchase a product (Astray, Darke, and Tasa, 2021). A customer who believes the value of the counterfeit is comparable to that of the genuine counterpart will prefer the counterfeit over the genuine counterpart. This is especially noticeable among brand-conscious customers with average incomes, who are more likely to be intrigued by high-quality counterfeits at low costs.

Customers are constantly looking for good value for their investment. With increases in counterfeit quality, it appears that mimicked items are becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate from the real brand or from other copied items. Furthermore, counterfeit product reliability ranges from high to low, prompting customers to become actively engaged with counterfeits, that is, to seek and assess existing possibilities. As a result of the varied standards of quality, the customer inquiry process is growing more complex, which might lead to



misunderstanding. According to studies, when a consumer's interest level is strong, the decision-making process goes through a long sequence of steps, from information gathering to item appraisal to purchasing. Customers who are fascinated by counterfeits might finish up searching for the finest counterfeit item within their grasp and eagerly comparing counterfeits to genuine goods. In this case, the customer requires additional time to collect data before coming to a selection. This means that the quality of counterfeit products results in a higher level of counterfeiting activity.

1.2 Direct Effects of Product Involvement:

Product engagement is described as a user's long-term significance or applicability of an item based on his or her needs and interests. Product participation has long been a key factor in shaping customer behavior since it determines the complexity of intellectual behavior during the decision-making process. When the level of product engagement is high, the "Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)" implies that there is indeed a strong link among product engagement, mindset, and buying motive. Customers' participation with counterfeit items is ultimately driven by the availability of options in their decision-making process, and customers will spend time analyzing product offerings, reliability, and pricing before making a purchase selection (Sharma and Chan, 2016). Despite the fact that buyers are aware that the item is counterfeit, they are attracted to it by its quality and cheaper pricing and are more inclined to acquire it due to the effort and hours invested in evaluating goods. Customer buying desire is expected to grow when they engage in information acquisition, qualitative assessment, and potential choices. In a similar manner, customer exposure to counterfeits may result in buying intention. Figure 2 presents the percentage of most affected industries due to the purchase of counterfeit products worldwide. It is clearly shown from the picture that footwear products are mostly affected by the production of counterfeit goods, followed by



clothing products, leather goods products, electrical equipment products, wrist watches products, medical equipment products, perfume & cosmetics products, different toys products, jewelry products, pharmaceuticals products, and some other industrial products.

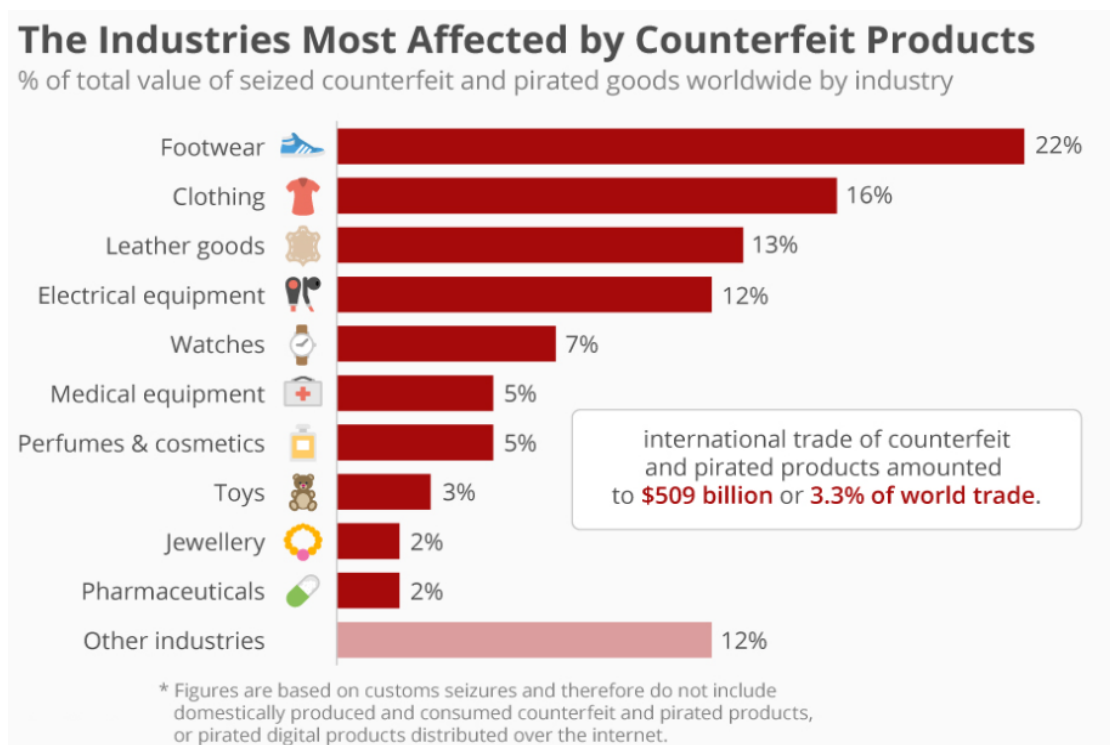


Figure 2: Most affected industries worldwide by Counterfeit Products

1.3 Behavioral attentions towards purchasing Counterfeit Goods

This research investigates behavioral purpose as a consequence of mindset regarding counterfeit item buying, driven by the theory of reasoned action. The taught inclination to act in a regularly positive or negative way with regard to a particular item is referred to as perspective. According to Ajzen and Fishbein, an individual's personal mindset is linked to their desires; hence it might be used as a predictor to assess behavior (Visentin, Pizzi, and Pichierri, 2019). Further, specifically, if an individual's perspective towards fake items is positive, it is assumed that he or she will purchase counterfeit items, and when the attitude is



negative, it is assumed that the individual would not purchase counterfeit items. When compared to non-counterfeit, buyers have a more positive opinion about counterfeits.

1.3.1 Religiosity:

Individuals' lives are shaped by their religious beliefs. It is an essential factor that has a favorable impact on customers' moral views. Those associated with a high level of religion are thought to have better morals in their views and concepts. Religion plays an important ethical role in modern life. It is claimed that all of the deity's rules are clear and form a user's entire life. Faith, rather than reason, secular understanding, and institutions, is the foundation of a religiously grounded moral existence (Yaakop et al., 2021). Unethical activity has a negative correlation with the severity of punishments, such the things mentioned below. Spiritual individuals are inspired to preserve ethics and integrity because of Divine wrath in this life and the hereafter.

1.3.2 Materialism:

Materialism is the inclination to place a higher priority on material belongings and bodily pleasure over religious virtues. Materialism is a different character trait that is associated only with a user's consumption. It is among the essential aspects that impact a user's perspective on earthly belongings that might bring satisfaction to the person. Many people have a more materialistic personality than others (Davidson, Nepomuceno, and Laroche, 2019). It acts as a mission in life; however, it can also be another factor that leads to the disregard and loss of other goals. When it is explained that materialism is a specific personality trait associated with a user's purchases, the impact of materialism on the mindset towards counterfeit products will be underscored even more. It is claimed that materialistic people place a greater emphasis on physical possessions, pleasures, and concerns while



ignoring or rejecting spiritual and mental matters. As a result, materialism encourages people to spend more and buy more things (Singh and Sahni, 2019). When people who believe this way find an inexpensive item, they are more likely to acquire additional items and resources. They want to buy counterfeit items because their materialistic nature compels them to use high-status products to make themselves appear wealthy. If individuals do not have sufficient cash to acquire branded products, they may opt to acquire fake items instead.

The notion of intentional conduct was explored in the development of this conceptual model. According to the theory of reasoned action, mindset has a positive impact on behavior. For the purposes of this research, it is believed that customers' attitudes toward the buying of counterfeit goods will influence their behavioral intentions. Figure 3 presents how materialism and religiosity play a significant role in purchasing counterfeit products from the perspective of the attitudes and behavioral intentions of participants.

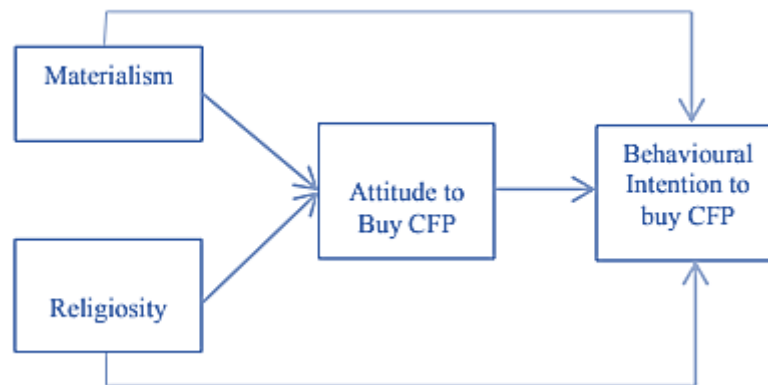


Figure 3: Relationship among materialism and religiosity towards behavioral attention towards Counterfeit Purchasing (CFP).

2. Research problem and research questions:

Counterfeit goods have a harmful impact on authorized enterprises' items by reducing profits, devaluing R&D, and causing legal expenditures. Many



governments and lawmakers in several nations have enacted rigorous guidelines and restrictions to limit the purchase and sale of such items based on their negative impact. Regardless of the fact that consumers are aware of the inferior quality and dangers of purchasing counterfeit products, counterfeit products continue to be in strong demand in the retail market. This has sparked the attention of numerous researchers in recent decades.

2.1 Research Problem:

According to reports, "Turkiye" has been designated as "Homes for Piracy."" Pirated or counterfeit items are those that are not produced by the actual manufacturer and have low performance and standards. Customers' moral considerations and religious convictions have been proven to significantly impact their purchasing behavior and their reactions to problematic product advertisements in previous research. As a result, it is projected that religion will substantially influence customers' intentions to buy counterfeit products. In total, the current research intends to investigate the impact of materialism and religion on customer attitudes and behavioral intentions towards purchasing counterfeit goods.

2.2 Research Questions:

Research questions lead our analysis towards useful recommendations.

- RQ1: Does a customer's opinion regarding counterfeit goods impact their behavioral intentions?
- RQ2: Is religion associated with a negative mindset regarding purchasing counterfeit goods?
- RQ3: Does religion have an adverse impact on the propensity to acquire counterfeit goods?



- RQ4: Does materialism have a favorable impact on people's attitudes about purchasing counterfeit goods?
- RQ5: Does materialism have a favorable impact on the willingness to purchase counterfeit goods?

3 Research Method: Qualitative Analysis

In this research method, we perform qualitative analysis on the intended audience of counterfeit purchased products. We conducted a detailed interview with 5 counterfeit product-affected participants. In these interviews, data is gathered from the participants with the perspective of designed questionnaires; to explore the miscellaneous issues faced by these parties. With the qualitative analysis, we also performed some quantitative analysis to get a better picture. For quantitative analysis, data is gathered from different perspectives from 300 participants who purchased counterfeit products in the recent past. The intended audience consisted of young-aged shoppers middle-aged purchasers who had purchased counterfeit goods in the past. The detail of these purchases is presented in section 3.1, data analysis on counterfeit product purchase. Every argument in the questions asked during the interview from purchases of counterfeit items was evaluated using a "five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5)."

Moreover, open-ended queries are asked to collect data using demographic factors. The interview information is then analyzed using the "Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)." The factor analysis is performed to observe on the "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO), Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the anti-image correlation matrix of items, communalities of the items, factor loadings, Eigenvalues, percentage of variance explained, and no cross-loading." Factor assessment is used because the majority of the



dimension's objects are modified and adapted from numerous resources, particularly those measurements of aspects affecting purchasing intentions. The common metric of durability is the intrinsic constancy of the scale, which was used to evaluate whether a set of products continuously mirrored the structure being measured. "Cronbach's alpha" was measured to analyze the intrinsic continuity of the procured variables and scales in this research. Furthermore, several regression assessments are utilized to anticipate the correlation among the 5 independent factors, the intermediary, and the dependent factors. All of the recommendations proposed in this research are tested using regression assessment.

3.1 Data Analysis on Counterfeit Product Purchase:

Demographic details of participants with respect to gender, age group, and marital status are summarized in Table 1. Figure 4 represents the demographic profile of the participant's data, as shown in Table 1. A total of 300 participants participated in this research. It was found that 270 of the participants were young adults, while the remaining were middle-aged. The analysis of the participants' information reveals that more than half of the participants were female, i.e., 180 and 120 were males. Out of these 300 participants, 69 participants were married, and 231 participants were single.



Table 1: Demographic details of participants

Demographic details of participants					
Gender Details		Age group		Marital Status	
Male	Female	Young Adults	Middle Aged	Single	Married
120	180	270	30	231	69

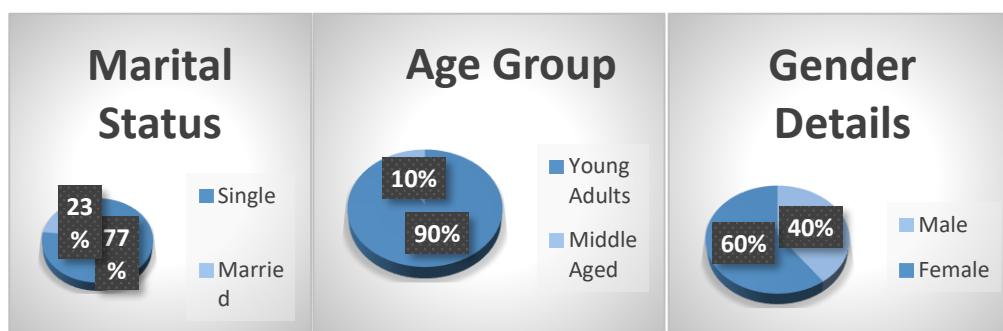


Figure 4: Demographic details of participants

In terms of the products that they have purchased in the past, most of the respondents have purchased counterfeit luxury designer bags around 78 by the participants, followed by counterfeit CDs and DVDs, i.e., around 75 by the participants, clothing (48 items), counterfeit cosmetics products (41 items), pharmaceuticals (28 items), computer software (27 items) and the least counterfeit automotive products (3 items). The detailed information is presented in Table 2 as follows. And its graphical representation is presented in Figure 5.



Table 2: Detail of counterfeit purchased products

Counterfeit purchased products details						
Pharmaceuticals	Luxury design bags	Cosmetics	CDs and DVDs	Software	Clothing	Automotive products
28	78	41	75	27	48	3

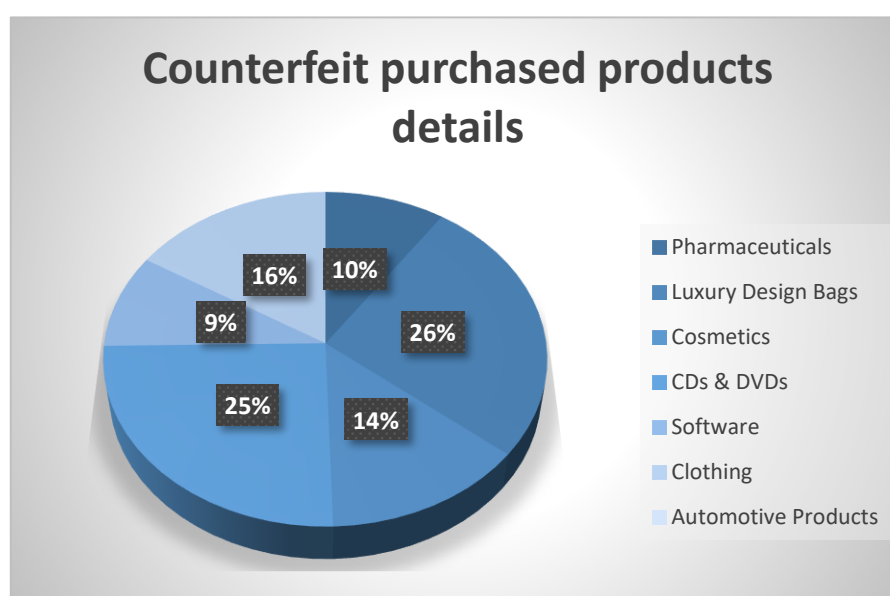


Figure 5: Detail of purchased products.

3.2 Economic Impacts of Counterfeit purchased products:

Counterfeiting is a big industry that is only becoming bigger as e-commerce, social networks, as well as robots get smarter. According to the Council for "Economic Cooperation and Development," counterfeit and stolen products commerce totaled "\$461 billion in 2013", an astounding number that is only expected to rise. In addition, the overall cost of counterfeit and stolen products



is expected to approach "\$2.81 trillion in 2022", which is greater than "France's or Brazil's" gross domestic product. And a large portion of the proceeds is funneled into the coffers of illegal gangs. According to "Harley Lewin," a colleague at the legal organization "McCarter & English" who has symbolized brand names like "New Balance, Reebok," and multiple other enterprises in multi-million-dollar intelligent real estate instances, whereas brands are trying to pressure top e-commerce locations, including such "Taobao and Amazon" to start cracking down on counterfeit items, they haven't yet focused their attention appropriately on social networks (Bian, Haque, and Smith, 2015). According to Lewin, a counterfeiter could use Instagram chatbots to create "5,000 bids" for the same product under multiple Instagram identities. "Whenever you can do that, it enables offering the smaller enterprise goods that considerably simpler." The economic impact of global counterfeiting of miscellaneous products and its piracy is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: The economic impacts of counterfeiting and piracy worldwide



3.3 Summary of findings:

Gender and repurchase plans had a strong link, according to the findings. Gender was considered to be a major indicator of propensity to acquire counterfeit goods by the investigators. According to the findings, the association is negative, implying that male customers are more likely than female customers to repurchase counterfeit items (Bupalan et al., 2019). This would be applicable for some counterfeit items, such as counterfeit programs, CDs, and DVDs, and also counterfeit automobile goods. Male buyers want to buy counterfeit items since the original versions are much more costly and often intend to buy them once more in the next. Nevertheless, the findings of this research reveal that there is really no link between aging and repurchase plans.

Customers among all categories, either youngsters or intermediate, continue to purchase counterfeit goods. People will intend to repurchase the counterfeit items if they are impressed with the counterfeit item that they would have previously bought. Furthermore, it was discovered that there must be a considerable association among prior buys and attitudes regarding counterfeit items, depending on the findings. This is true because if a consumer has previously bought counterfeit goods and been pleased with that as well, they would have a good perspective regarding the goods. They will believe that it is preferable for them to purchase inexpensive counterfeit goods that appear to be identical to the originals and that it is often difficult to distinguish between the real and counterfeit things.

4 . Suggestions and Recommendations to handle counterfeit products.

Following suggestions are very useful to handle counterfeit products.

4.1 Company protection from the start.

Each firm's business strategy should include funding for IP security again from the beginning, according to Lewin. "In the modern environment, you don't really have anything if you may not have an Internet protocol." "It's not a question of whether you'll be counterfeited; it's a question of when," adds Lewin. To prevent downstream difficulties, Dube recommends enterprises to defend itself as broadly as feasible from the



start: "The range of the legislation is regional, while the range of counterfeiters is worldwide."

4.2 Worldwide Trademark Registration.

Registering your rights is the very first stage. If you really want to safeguard your brand, you must not only register your goods in the United States but also your trademarks as well as other intellectual property in China as early as feasible. Not only do you need to register the English equivalent of your goods in China, but you also want to register the Chinese name of your item. Although if you merely intend to produce your goods in China but not sell them, do not consider it until you've obtained your Chinese trademark. China is a "first-to-file" nation, which implies that whoever registers a trademark for an item also has all the unique powers to market it. Dube has now seen cases where firms believe they are protected by trademarks, only to have their items registered in Chinese, preventing them from selling their original goods in China (Montecchi, Plangger and Etter, 2019).

Trademark safety in "China" is characterized by categories and some desired classes. Some corporations safeguard participants by registering spots in distinct categories and covering many linked services and products that might be in danger. Like, "Starbucks" licensed their brand name in more than forty-five categories of services and goods in China. The authorization procedure can carry anytime from 14 to 25 months. If someone discovers counterfeits of one's item on "Taobao" and has not yet obtained product Chinese brand name, "Alibaba" now has an IP safeguard procedure in place and will remove intruding goods based on a United States brand name from all of their portals, including Taobao. After obtaining trademark rights in the United States and China, organizations must record those trademarks with customs departments in both United States and China so that agencies can grab the intruding products. Furthermore, organizations must record for the "Madrid Protocol," which permits businesses with a brand name in their home nation to demand extra licensing in around sixty member nations in Africa, Europe, and Asia.



4.3 Manufacturing and non-disclosure contracts with industries.

After the registration of products trademark and are operating with middlemen to locate a production plant that can manufacture your item, ensure they contract a non-disclosure agreement that explicitly describes how they will use your intellectual property. It's all regarding "due diligence, due diligence, due diligence" when it relates to discovering the appropriate persons to do marketing around the globe. According to Harris, "First, identify the appropriate persons in the home nation who are familiar with the global market and can assist you in finding the right people worldwide." According to him, it is invariably critical to executing due dedication on any prospective companion (Samaddar and Menon, 2021). When a company has been recognized that can produce a working model or a limited quantity of someone's good or service, the middleman must obtain the company's signature on a non-disclosure agreement before proceeding, regardless of how challenging it may be to discover a production plant.

Once you've discovered the appropriate production plant to work within the long run, there is the company's consent, which is a detailed memorandum that describes each information of production and establishes the criteria of behavior: what occurs if the production plant overruns, how they handle defective and seconds items. According to Lewin, "It certifies who owns what and what they do every step of the way, which gives very little wiggle room when you catch them doing something they're not authorized to do." Adding that any competent producer would agree to one of these terms and conditions without any hesitation. He advises dealing with an attorney with substantial global expertise who can draught an agreement that is legally binding worldwide.

4.4 Efficient policing.

A brand name is only the first step. Following that, you must analyze the internet on a frequent routine in order to remove counterfeit items. A committed individual on the company team, such as a technology director in responsibility of policing, may be a smart strategy for lesser businesses accountable for trademark security and the protection of company copyrights. "It simply creates priorities, and such a professional is useful in responding to queries and liaising with law enforcement personnel all around the world."



Joining market associations is another excellent opportunity to interact with other company entrepreneurs and share best practices, connections, and knowledge. The "International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition Inc. (IACC)" holds fall and spring meetings throughout the United States. Dube established the "Asian Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy in Asia." These groups also collaborate with the industry to increase the exposure of the counterfeiting issue and to fight for greater online regulation. There are also associations dedicated to certain industries.

4.5 Inventory tracking.

Another approach is to use trace & tracking solutions. Invisible threads, chips, or markings might be included inside the goods or on the package. It's critical to understand anything about the item it's been forwarded to; if it's been rerouted, that company can manage any issues that emerge. "Blockchain" is being used by several alcohol and pharmaceutical industries to confirm the legitimacy of respective goods. The technology is identical to that which runs cryptocurrency; it provides a publicly electronic record with protected time-stamped copies of events encoded for imaginary safety. Like, the "Ardnamurchan Distillery in Scotland" displays machine-readable QR codes on its liquor packaging, which confirms data regarding its distribution chain. Customers may learn where the barley was cultivated and when it was manufactured while also ensuring the item's legitimacy.

4.6 Strategy of zero tolerance.

The financial flow to companies and dealers in Malaysia, Russia, Kazakhstan, China, and a number of other nations, leading regional police to conduct searches that resulted in the confiscation of counterfeit items, banking information, and luxurious residences. "some one is attempting to generate an annoyance element for counterfeiters, which may cause them to divert their attention some where and leave it alone." Similarly, Lewin recommends organizations adopt a "zero-tolerance" approach. "We cope with anything that appears through the gate, one way or another." We are sending information to the merchants, wholesalers, and sales person that you'll back them up.



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