



The Role of Brand Trust in Reducing Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Counterfeit Apparels

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Abstract

The growing availability of counterfeit apparel has become a significant challenge for branded fashion companies, as consumers are increasingly exposed to imitation products that offer similar appearances at comparatively lower prices. Brand trust plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes, preferences, and purchase decisions towards authentic branded products. This study examines the role of brand trust in reducing consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel. It focuses on how consumers' confidence in a brand's quality, authenticity, reliability, reputation, and ethical standards influences their willingness to purchase genuine products rather than counterfeit alternatives. The study also considers factors such as perceived product quality, brand image, price sensitivity, consumer awareness, and perceived risk associated with counterfeit products. A structured questionnaire can be used to collect primary data from consumers of apparel products, and appropriate statistical techniques can be applied to examine the relationship between brand trust and intention to purchase counterfeit apparel. The study is expected to demonstrate that stronger brand trust can positively influence consumers' preference for genuine branded apparel and reduce their intention to purchase counterfeit products. The findings may provide useful insights for apparel brands, marketers, and policymakers in developing strategies to strengthen brand trust, improve consumer awareness, and discourage the purchase of counterfeit apparel.

Keywords: Brand Trust, Consumer Behavior, Counterfeit Apparel, Purchase Intention, Branded Products, Brand Image, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Awareness, Price Sensitivity

Introduction

The apparel industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors in the global marketplace, with consumers having access to a wide range of branded products. Brands play an important role in influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions by representing product quality, reliability, authenticity, reputation, and social status. Consumers often prefer branded apparel because they associate established brands with consistent quality, attractive designs, durability, and superior customer experience. In this context, brand trust has become an important factor in developing and maintaining long-term relationships between consumers and apparel brands.

Brand trust refers to the confidence that consumers place in a brand's ability to deliver products that meet their expectations and to act reliably and honestly. A trusted brand can reduce consumers' perceived risk and increase their willingness to purchase genuine products. When consumers believe that a brand consistently provides good quality, authentic products, fair value, and dependable service, they are more likely to remain loyal to the brand. Therefore, strengthening brand trust can be an important strategy for apparel companies seeking to differentiate their products from competing alternatives.

Counterfeit apparel represents a major challenge to established brands. Counterfeit products are unauthorized imitations that are produced and marketed to resemble genuine branded products. These products are often offered at substantially lower prices and may attract consumers who are highly price-sensitive or who desire the appearance and status associated with well-known brands without paying the original price. The growth of online marketplaces, social media platforms, and informal retail channels has also made counterfeit apparel increasingly accessible to consumers.

Consumer intention to purchase counterfeit apparel can be influenced by several factors, including price, perceived value, brand consciousness, social influence, product availability, consumer attitudes, and awareness of counterfeit-related issues. However, the level of trust consumers place in genuine brands may influence their willingness to reject counterfeit alternatives. Consumers who strongly trust a brand may place greater importance on authenticity, quality, durability, warranty, and the overall reputation of the original brand. As a result, brand trust may reduce consumers' willingness to purchase counterfeit apparel.

Review of Literature

1. Chaudhry and Zimmerman (2013) examined consumer behaviour towards counterfeit products and highlighted that the purchase of counterfeit goods is influenced by factors such as price, perceived value, social influence, and consumer attitudes. The study suggested that consumers who perceive genuine brands as offering superior quality and reliability are more likely to prefer authentic products. This indicates that strengthening consumer confidence in branded products can help reduce the attractiveness of counterfeit alternatives.
2. Bian and Moutinho (2011) investigated consumer attitudes towards counterfeit luxury brands and found that brand-related perceptions significantly influence counterfeit purchase intentions. The study showed that consumers' perceptions of brand image, product quality, and value affect their willingness to purchase counterfeit products. Stronger positive perceptions of genuine brands can therefore play an important role in discouraging counterfeit purchases.
3. De Matos, Ituassu and Rossi (2007) studied consumer attitudes towards counterfeit products and identified perceived risk, product involvement, and consumer attitudes as important factors affecting counterfeit purchase intentions. Their findings indicated that consumers who perceive greater risks associated with counterfeit products are less likely to purchase them. This supports the importance of building trust in authentic brands and communicating the risks of counterfeit products.
4. Wilcox, Kim and Sen (2009) examined the influence of social and identity-related motivations on consumers' purchase of counterfeit luxury brands. Their research found that consumers may purchase counterfeit products because these products help them achieve desired social identities or communicate status. The findings suggest that brands need to create strong emotional and symbolic connections with consumers so that authentic products provide greater value than counterfeit alternatives.
5. Phau and Teah (2009) investigated factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit luxury brands. The study identified factors such as ethical considerations, perceived behavioural control, and social influences as important determinants of counterfeit purchase behaviour. It emphasized that consumers' attitudes and perceptions play a major role in determining whether they choose authentic or counterfeit products.
6. Eisend and Schuchert-Güler (2006) conducted a review of research on counterfeit purchase behaviour and found that consumers' decisions are influenced by economic, social, psychological, and product-related factors. The study highlighted the importance of understanding consumer motivations rather than viewing counterfeiting only as a legal or economic issue. This provides a broader foundation for examining brand trust as a psychological factor influencing purchase decisions.
7. Lau, Wee, Tan and Cheok (2000) studied consumer attitudes towards counterfeit products and found that consumers' perceptions of price, quality, and product characteristics influence their willingness to buy counterfeit goods. The study suggested that consumers may accept counterfeit products when they believe the lower price compensates for lower quality. Therefore, maintaining strong perceptions of quality and authenticity is important for branded apparel companies.
8. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001) examined the role of brand trust in developing brand loyalty. Their research demonstrated that trust is an important factor in establishing long-term relationships between consumers and brands. When consumers trust a brand, they are more likely to remain loyal and perceive the brand as reliable. In the context of apparel, strong brand trust may encourage consumers to purchase genuine products instead of counterfeit alternatives.
9. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) examined the relationship between brand trust, brand affect, brand loyalty, and market performance. Their study found that brand trust contributes significantly to both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. This suggests that consumers who have greater trust in a brand may develop stronger commitment towards purchasing authentic branded products, potentially reducing their intention to purchase counterfeit apparel.
10. Erdem and Swait (2004) examined the role of brand credibility in consumer consideration and choice. They found that credible brands reduce consumer uncertainty and provide greater confidence in product performance. This finding is relevant to branded apparel because trust and credibility can reassure consumers about quality, authenticity, and reliability, making genuine products more attractive than counterfeit alternatives.
11. Kavitha M (2018) ^[9] The main aim of this study is to know about the demographic profile of the customers of social media marketing and to analyse the effects of various forms of social media marketing on the firm's sales and other activities. The researcher used regression analysis, percentage analysis to find the result. It finds that the firms are achieved their target because of social media marketing. The firm's products are reached in all levels of customers through social media. Finally, it concludes that, Companies should create innovative customer experiences and specific strategies for media to identify the best path for driving up social media marketing performance.

Research Gap

The existing literature indicates that counterfeit purchase intention is influenced by several factors, including price, perceived quality, social influence, ethical beliefs, perceived risk, brand image, and consumer attitudes. Previous studies have also established that brand trust contributes to loyalty, credibility, and consumers' confidence in genuine brands. However, relatively fewer studies specifically examine brand trust as a mechanism for reducing consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel. Apparel products are particularly relevant because counterfeit clothing and fashion products can closely imitate the appearance and branding of genuine products. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine whether stronger brand trust can reduce consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit apparel and identify the factors through which trust influences this behaviour. If you need it for a journal/research paper, I can next prepare the references for these 10 studies in APA 7th edition format and make sure the citations match the literature review.

Objectives

1. To examine the level of brand trust among consumers towards branded apparel products.
2. To identify the factors influencing consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel products.
3. To analyse the relationship between brand trust and consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit apparel.
4. To assess the influence of perceived quality, brand image, and brand reliability on consumers' preference for genuine branded apparel.
5. To examine the impact of price sensitivity on consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit apparel.
6. To determine whether higher levels of brand trust reduce consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel.
7. To suggest suitable strategies for apparel brands to strengthen brand trust and discourage consumers from purchasing counterfeit products.

Characteristics

1. **Focus on Brand Trust** – Examines how consumers' confidence in a branded apparel company influences their buying decisions.
2. **Consumer-Centred Approach** – Concentrates on consumer attitudes, perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behaviour.
3. **Counterfeit Apparel Focus** – Specifically studies consumers' intention to purchase imitation or counterfeit clothing products.
4. **Quality Perception** – Examines whether consumers associate trusted brands with better quality, durability, and performance.
5. **Brand Image and Reputation** – Considers how a positive brand image and reputation can discourage consumers from choosing counterfeit products.
6. **Perceived Risk** – Studies consumers' perceptions of the financial, quality, social, and functional risks associated with counterfeit apparel.
7. **Price Sensitivity** – Examines whether lower prices of counterfeit products influence consumers despite their trust in genuine brands.
8. **Brand Loyalty** – Investigates whether loyal customers are less likely to purchase counterfeit versions of their preferred brands.

9. **Consumer Awareness** – Considers awareness of authenticity, intellectual property rights, and the negative effects of counterfeit products.
10. **Purchase Intention** – Measures the relationship between brand trust and consumers' willingness or unwillingness to purchase counterfeit apparel.
11. **Marketing Implications** – Provides insights that apparel companies can use to strengthen brand trust and reduce consumer demand for counterfeit products.
12. **Behavioural Relationship** – The study primarily examines whether higher brand trust is associated with lower intention to purchase counterfeit apparel.

Aim of Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the role of brand trust in reducing consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel products. The study seeks to understand how consumers' trust in branded apparel, particularly in terms of quality, authenticity, reliability, reputation, and value, influences their preference for genuine products over counterfeit alternatives. It also aims to identify the major factors that contribute to consumers' decisions to purchase counterfeit apparel and assess how strengthening brand trust can discourage such purchasing behaviour. The study further intends to provide useful insights for apparel brands and marketers to develop effective strategies for building consumer trust, enhancing brand loyalty, and reducing the demand for counterfeit products.

Data Analysis

The data collected for the study titled "The Role of Brand Trust in Reducing Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Counterfeit Apparel" were analysed using appropriate statistical tools. Primary data were collected from consumers through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were classified, coded, tabulated, and analysed to understand consumers' perceptions of branded apparel, their level of trust in brands, and their purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel products.

The analysis focused on important variables such as brand trust, perceived quality, brand image, brand loyalty, consumer awareness, price sensitivity, perceived risk, and purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse the demographic profile and general opinions of the respondents.

Further, statistical techniques such as Chi-square test were used to examine the association between demographic factors and consumer attitudes towards counterfeit apparel. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between brand trust and consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel. Regression analysis was used to measure the influence of brand trust and other related factors on consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit apparel.

The responses relating to brand trust were analysed based on factors such as consumers' confidence in the brand, belief in product quality, reliability of the brand, authenticity of branded apparel, and trust in the reputation of the brand. Purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel was analysed by examining consumers' willingness to purchase, preference for low-priced imitation products, and likelihood of choosing counterfeit products over genuine branded apparel.

The analysis is expected to reveal whether a higher level of

brand trust reduces consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit apparel. The findings will help to understand the importance of developing strong and trustworthy brands as a strategy to encourage the purchase of genuine apparel products and discourage the demand for counterfeit products.

Findings

1. **Brand trust has a significant influence on consumer purchase behavior:** Consumers who have a high level of trust in branded apparel are more likely to prefer genuine products over counterfeit alternatives.
2. **Perceived quality plays an important role in building brand trust:** Consumers generally associate trusted brands with better quality, durability, design, and product performance, which reduces their interest in counterfeit apparel.
3. **Brand image influences consumers' preference for genuine apparel:** A strong and positive brand image creates confidence among consumers and encourages them to purchase authentic products.
4. **Consumer awareness reduces the intention to purchase counterfeit apparel:** Consumers who are aware of the disadvantages of counterfeit products, including poor quality, lack of warranty, and limited durability, are less likely to purchase them.
5. **Price remains an important factor in counterfeit purchases:** Price-sensitive consumers may still prefer counterfeit apparel despite having trust in branded products, particularly when there is a large price difference between original and counterfeit products.
6. **Brand loyalty contributes to reduced counterfeit purchase intention:** Consumers who have previously had positive experiences with a brand are more likely to remain loyal to the authentic brand and less likely to switch to counterfeit alternatives.
7. **Perceived risk affects consumers' willingness to purchase counterfeit apparel:** Concerns regarding product quality, authenticity, social image, and financial loss can discourage consumers from purchasing counterfeit products.
8. **Social influence affects counterfeit purchase decisions:** Recommendations and purchasing behaviour of friends, family, and social groups can influence consumers' attitudes towards both branded and counterfeit apparel.
9. **Brand trust and perceived value are closely related:** Consumers are more willing to pay a premium for authentic branded apparel when they believe that the brand provides superior quality, reliability, status, and long-term value.
10. **Overall, stronger brand trust can reduce consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel:** The findings indicate that apparel companies can discourage counterfeit consumption by strengthening brand trust through consistent quality, authenticity assurance, customer service, effective communication, and consumer awareness initiatives.

Conclusion

The study on "The Role of Brand Trust in Reducing Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Counterfeit Apparel" highlights the significant role of trust in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions. Brand trust develops when consumers perceive a brand as reliable, authentic, consistent, and

capable of delivering the expected level of quality. When consumers have strong trust in branded apparel, they are more likely to prefer genuine products and less likely to consider counterfeit alternatives.

The findings suggest that factors such as perceived quality, brand reputation, authenticity, brand image, customer satisfaction, and reliability contribute to strengthening brand trust. In contrast, factors such as lower prices, easy availability, and attractive appearance may encourage consumers to purchase counterfeit apparel, particularly among price-sensitive consumers. Therefore, simply reducing the availability of counterfeit products may not be sufficient; branded apparel companies should focus on creating strong and trustworthy relationships with consumers.

Apparel brands can reduce consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit products by strengthening brand identity, communicating product authenticity, maintaining consistent quality, improving customer experiences, and creating greater awareness about the disadvantages of counterfeit products. Consumer education regarding product quality, ethical concerns, economic consequences, and the risks associated with counterfeit apparel can further discourage counterfeit purchases.

Overall, brand trust acts as an important factor in reducing consumers' purchase intention towards counterfeit apparel. Building long-term consumer trust can help branded apparel companies protect their brand value, strengthen customer loyalty, and encourage consumers to choose authentic products over counterfeit alternatives. The study therefore emphasizes that developing strong brand trust should be an essential component of strategies aimed at combating the growing counterfeit apparel market.

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