

# Application of Theory of Planned Behavior to counterfeit garment brands purchase: a qualitative research

*Taranpreet Kaur Dhingra, Dr. Ambika Bhatia*

Research Scholar, Punjabi University, Patiala

Assistant Professor, Regional Campus of Punjabi University, Mohali

**Abstract:** Theory of Planned Behavior has been used in a number of studies to understand the consumer behavior. Almost all such researches have utilized quantitative methods for research. In this research, an attempt has been made to apply the Theory of Planned Behavior to the counterfeit garment brand purchase using qualitative methods. This research tried to identify the factors that influence consumers to buy or not to buy counterfeit garment brands based on the constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior. Three focus group interviews were conducted for 30 people in a group of ten each. The three groups comprised of respondents from different age groups. The responses were hence analyzed to identify the similarities and differences in the factors of importance while purchasing branded/ counterfeit garments between the three groups of respondents

**Keywords:** Theory of Planned Behavior, qualitative methods, focus group interview, counterfeit garment brand purchase

## INTRODUCTION

The term “counterfeiting” refers to the unauthorized reproduction of goods protected by an intellectual property right. Counterfeiting can entail the imitation of a trade-mark, label or any other important characteristic associated with a product, as well as copyright infringement (House of Commons Canada, 2007).

Counterfeiting means all the illegal activities related to violation of all the intellectual property rights (IPRs). The dictionary meaning of the word counterfeit is to forge currency documents. But these days counterfeiting also includes illegal use of well known company logos, brands and designs to sell a local product at a cheaper price as compared to what is quoted by the original brand. Mostly three kinds of consumer goods are highly prone to counterfeiting:

- a) Those which are very expensive
- b) Those which are in high demand
- c) Those which can be easily copied

If we look from the consumer's perspective, the consumers who purchase counterfeit products are in either of the two following situations, viz:

- 1) Consumers who unknowingly purchase a counterfeit brand, i.e. the consumer is unaware of the fact that he has been sold a counterfeit brand instead of original. This is deceptive counterfeit purchase.
- 2) Consumers who are aware of the fact that they are buying a counterfeit brand. This is intentional counterfeit purchase.

The second category of consumers are studied in this research.

A number of researches have been done to know why people buy counterfeit brands because counterfeit brands are doing a good business these days and harming the original brands at the same time.

### **Counterfeiting: Clothing Industry In India**

With the liberalization of the Indian economy, a number of international brands have come to India with their international products. Some of the brands like Esprit, Louis Vuitton, Giorgio Armani and many more are very expensive to afford for the Indian middle and lower middle class people. But the aspiration to be attached with top notch brands is the highest in that segment. Following

this huge demand, there is excessive counterfeiting prevalent in all the clothing brands.

Studies say that in India, the most popular counterfeit market is clothing. And the students and businessmen form the major chunk (31%) who buy fake brands followed by service class and housewives. Source: <http://www.fibre2fashion.com>

### **Impact of Counterfeiting**

Few years back, counterfeiting was more or less seen in developing economies, due to their ignorance, as a victimless offence that facilitates the market with a cheap substitute product of a little lower quality. Consumers were hardly aware that such widespread abuse of Intellectual Property gives birth to health and safety hazards for them, loss of jobs, loss of profits to the original manufacturers and, above all, largely affects their economy. Also, in the long term, the sale of forged goods damages the reputation and the profits of manufacturers, trademark owners and traders, and impairs consumer confidence in the genuine products.

### **Objective of Research**

To identify the factors that influence people to buy counterfeit garment brands.

### **Theoretical Framework**

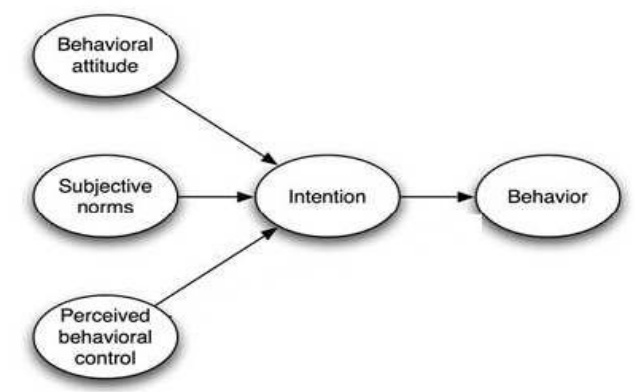
#### **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

It was formulated by Ajzen (1985). TPB proposes that individuals' attitudinal or personal component and a social component toward an act positively influence intentions to perform the specific act. As an extension of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980)

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), TPB delineates that attitudinal component, normative component, and control over the behavior formulate individuals' intentions and further influence subsequent behavior.

TRA is based on the assumption that "human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them and that they consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 5). Thus, TRA posits that an individual's behavioural attitude influences intention.

TRA also includes a social component, the subjective norm, referring to an individual's perception of the social pressure to whether or not to perform the behaviour in question (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).



Consumers' intentions toward purchasing counterfeit brands may also be influenced by factors other than favorable attitudes and subjective norm. TPB addresses this issue by including the construct of perceived control of behaviour (PCB).

PCB has been defined as an individual's perception of the degree to which he/she is capable of or has control over performing a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Another conceptualization of PCB is the perceived belief of how easy or difficult the performance of the behaviour in question is likely to be (Ajzen & Madden, 1986, p. 457). PCB in the TPB has two subcomponents: internal factor and external factor. Internal factor refers to the extent of confidence that a person has in his/her ability to perform a behaviour; whereas the external factor refers to the resource constraints (such as time and money) that are required to perform the behaviour (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). High perceived control represents a fundamental expectation that internal factors, such as competence, willpower, and determination, are responsible for performing (or not performing) behaviours, outcomes, and events in an individual's life (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to House of Commons Canada, 2007, Counterfeit products are defined as the "unauthorized reproduction of goods protected by an intellectual property right". Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000, stated that counterfeit consumption is a growing phenomenon, with studies estimating that 59% to 70% of the North American population has engaged in this behaviour. According to Allred, Bristol, Chakraborty, & Sukhdail, 1997; Grossman & Shapiro, 1988 counterfeit consumption is not limited to one product or brand category, and

occurs in both deceptive and non-deceptive purchasing situations.

According to Ajzen, behavior is a direct outcome of intention which in turn depends on attitude, subjective norms and perceived control of behavior. Ajzen,1991 states that attitudes represent “the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question”, subjective norms represent “the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior” and perceived behavioral control is “the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior ...assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles”.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

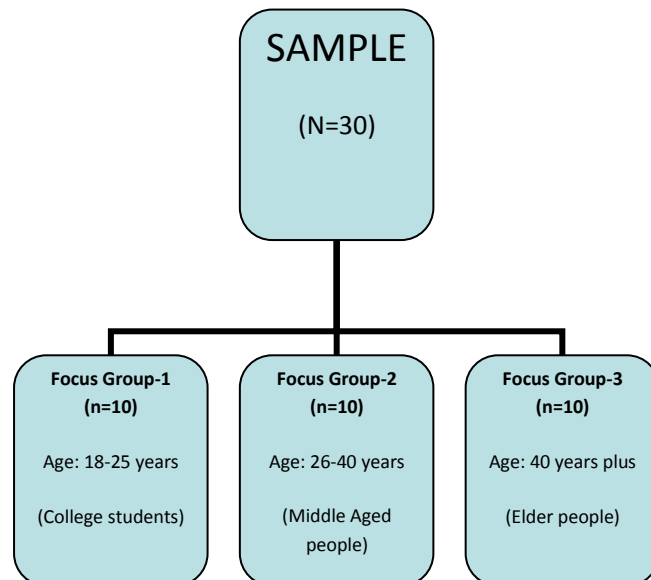
Research design is a pattern or an outline of a research project’s working. It is a statement of the essential elements of a study, those that provide the basic guidelines for the details of the project. This research is exploratory in nature, where efforts were made to investigate the factors which influence the purchase of counterfeit garment brands based on Theory of Planned Behavior.

### Sampling Technique

Judgmental sampling was used in this research. The sample was selected in such a way that the respondents of each focus group were homogeneous on the basis of age within the group and heterogeneous between the groups.

The sample was chosen from various low and middle income residential areas of Ludhiana city which include Daresi, Shivpuri and Basti Jodhewal.

The sample was chosen in the following way:



### Sample Size

Sample size for the study was 30 respondents which included 13 men and 17 women.

### Data collection

Data was collected through focus group interviews. Three focus group interviews were conducted such that every focus group had 10 respondents. An informal environment was provided to the respondents so that they do not hesitate in revealing their thoughts and feelings. Every focus group lasted for around one hour. The respondents were asked some unstructured questions. They were allowed to take the discussion in any direction. The questions were based on the constructs of Theory of Planned Behavior. The questions prompted the participants to reveal their underlying motivations or beliefs

that influence them to purchase counterfeit garment brands. All their responses were noted down for further interpretations.

### Questionnaire development

The outline of the focus group interview was based on TPB model used in the study. A few questions were developed to cover the three elements of the model (viz attitude, subjective norms and perceived control of behavior).

The following unstructured questions were asked to initiate the discussion.

Attitude	<p>Respondents were asked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their perception about duplicate garment brands</li> <li>• the positive and negative effects of duplicate garment brands</li> </ul>
Subjective Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important is it for you to wear clothes that will appeal to your friends?</li> <li>• Do you update your wardrobe according to latest fashions?</li> </ul>
Perceived Control Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stops you from buying duplicate garment brands?</li> <li>• Do you think twice before buying duplicate garment brands? Why?</li> </ul>

## DATA INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS

Every minute detail of the focus group interview was noted down during the interview. This made it easy to analyze the responses from three different groups later on. The responses from the three different groups (different age groups) were not consistent and hence we can draw out meaningful conclusions from this research.

### Focus Group 1: Age Group 18-25 years

The data collected from this group reveals that the respondents do not mind buying counterfeit garment brands if they are of acceptable quality. Although they relate duplicate brands with low quality but they are worth buying because they are value for money.

It is very important for this group of respondents that their garments appeal to their friends and other social circle. They prefer to wear those clothes only which are in trend. And therefore to add variety to their wardrobe, they would not mind having a few counterfeit garment brands in their wardrobe along with the branded ones.

According to these respondents, price is an important determinant while making a purchase. Thus they do not mind buying a counterfeit garment brand if it is stylish and has acceptable quality since it saves a lot of money. On ethical grounds, all the respondents agree that honesty is the best policy and it wrong to use someone else's brand name. But at the same time they do not feel buying counterfeit garment brands is unethical since according to them brands are rather overpriced.

### Focus Group 2: Age Group 26-40 years

The data collected from this group reveals that the respondents are negative about buying counterfeit garment brands. They relate duplicate brands with very low quality and feel that it is waste to spend anything on duplicate brands. They feel that it is

better to wear non-branded garments than to wear duplicate brands of garments.

It is more important for this group of respondents that their garments are comfortable and decent looking. Approval from their friends and other social circle also matters to them. According to these respondents, brands depict your status. But wearing a duplicate brand rather lowers your status in the society. This group is less willing to buy a counterfeit brand of garments.

In terms of ethics, the respondents agree that honesty is the best policy and it wrong to use someone else's brand name. They also feel that both manufacturing and buying counterfeit garment brands is unethical.

### **Focus Group 3: Age Group 40 years above**

The data collected from this group reveals that the respondents are less conscious about brands. They are more conscious about the quality of garments they wear. They also feel that branded garments are overpriced. They would purchase a garment looking at both quality and price.

It is less important for this group of respondents that their garments appeal to their friends and other social circle. They prefer to wear those clothes which are comfortable and of good quality.

According to these respondents, price is an important determinant while making a garment purchase. These people have very strong ethics and consider it wrong to sell or purchase such counterfeit brands of garments. They have a very strong notion that duplicate things cannot be long lasting and have a poor quality. For this reason they would never buy counterfeit garment brands.

### **CONCLUSION**

Majority of the respondents perceived duplicate garment brands as a cheap option for the ones who

cannot afford brands. Therefore PRICE is the most important factor which allures people to buy counterfeit garment brands. Almost everyone related the duplicate brands with low quality but at the same time the young generation agreed that sometimes duplicate garment brands are value for money.

The younger age group was comparatively more positive about the counterfeit brands as compared to the middle-aged and the older age group. The younger generation wears counterfeit garment brands in lieu of the original brands to raise their social status whereas the aged people consider it below their dignity to wear such duplicate garment brands. The youth is more fashion conscious and likes variety of garments which cannot be afforded if one wears original brands. Therefore youth indulges in buying counterfeit garments.

Ethically and morally stable people do not support purchase of counterfeit garment brands. But sometimes they indulge in such purchase behavior due to low prices and to have variety in their wardrobe. It can also be concluded that with increase in age, generally trend of purchasing counterfeit garment brands decreases.

Therefore, on the basis of constructs of TPB, the most important factors influencing purchase of counterfeit garment brands are age, price, fashion consciousness, social status and ethics.

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