



Demographic influence on consumer Attitudes regarding counterfeit apparel purchase: A study of Punjab state in INDIA

Munisha

Ph.D Scholar, CT University, Ludhiana

Email: munisha.ggn@gmail.com

Contact: 9501577155

Dr. Navdeep Kaur

Associate Professor, CT University

Email: drnavdeep17873@ctuniversity.in

Contact: 9803733267

ABSTRACT

The current study's main objective is to determine how customer perceptions of purchasing counterfeit goods in the Indian state of Punjab are impacted by demographics. The study specifically sought to investigate the associations between opinions towards the buying of counterfeit apparel and age, gender, income, and educational attainment. Design/Technique Employed: The nature of the investigation was quantitative. In the study, 810 consumers in the Indian state of Punjab were surveyed in order to collect data. Descriptive statistics such as means and frequencies, together with the t test and ANOVA, were used to examine the survey data.

Limitations of the study: The study's scope was restricted to the Indian state of Punjab; other regions of the country were not included. This limits the generalizability of the results to other regions of the country.

Practical implications: The study's conclusions can assist policymakers by increasing consumer awareness of the consequences of purchasing counterfeit clothing. Policymakers might also utilise the findings of the one study to develop and implement rules that specifically target younger buyers and other demographics that are more likely to purchase counterfeit clothing.

Originality/value: This study focuses on the State of Punjab in India, which has a unique cultural and economic environment. This study provides important insights into the factors influencing consumer choices in a specific context by analyzing how consumers in this area perceive imitation clothing.

Keywords: Consumer attitudes, Counterfeit clothing, Demographics, Ethical concerns, Purchase behavior

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Introduction: A worldwide problem, counterfeit apparel has an impact on every facet of the fashion industry, including high-end, athletic, and subculture labels. According to estimates, the Indian counterfeit business is worth billions of dollars, and Punjab has become a major hub for this illicit activity (Alhidari, 2019). Punjabi and other Indian consumers frequently buy counterfeit apparel

for a variety of reasons, such as accessibility, cost, and perceived similarity to real goods (Dassalew, 2017). Nevertheless, buying counterfeit clothing can harm brands' reputations, reduce sales, and divert funds from respectable businesses, all of which can have a detrimental effect on the fashion industry (Jun et al. 2017). Counterfeit items are often produced using immoral and



unlawful means, such as child labour and environmental devastation. Therefore, resolving this issue requires an awareness of the elements that impact consumer attitudes regarding buying counterfeit apparel. Fashion businesses and policymakers can get significant insights from researching the impact of demographic variables, such as age, gender, income, and education level, on attitudes towards counterfeit garments. These variables are known to influence customer behaviour. This study aims to explore the ways in which demographic factors impact the purchasing decisions of consumers in the Indian state of Punjab regarding the purchase of counterfeit clothing. We are able to identify the primary demographic characteristics impacting opinions about purchasing fake apparel by analyzing data collected from a representative Punjabi consumer sample. The outcomes of this research can facilitate the development of workable strategies for reducing and ultimately eliminating the market for counterfeit clothing, upholding ethical business practices, and promoting ethical consumer behaviour.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

Numerous scholarly investigations have examined the impact of demographics on buyer perceptions regarding counterfeit merchandise, encompassing apparel. For instance, a study carried out in Turkey by Ercis et al. (2019) discovered that older consumers were more inclined to favour genuine products, whilst younger consumers were more likely to buy counterfeit clothing. This study also found that income and education level were major predictors of attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing. According to Chaudhry and Stump's (2017) US study, income and education level were positively correlated with choosing legitimate products, but sentiments about buying counterfeit clothing were found to be adversely correlated. This study also found that gender or age did not significantly impact attitudes towards counterfeit clothing. On the other hand, a Chinese study by Chen et al. (2017) discovered that while income and

education level were not significant indicators of views regarding the purchasing of counterfeit clothes, gender and age were. According to this survey, older and female buyers were less inclined to buy fake clothing. According to a study conducted in Australia by Sweeney and Souter (2001), opinions regarding counterfeit goods were influenced by a number of characteristics, such as perceived risk, product participation, and demographics. According to this study, consumers who are younger, have lower incomes, and are less educated are more inclined to buy counterfeit goods, whereas consumers who are more involved with the product and who sense more risk are more likely to favour real goods.

Zhang et al. (2014) carried out a study in China to find out the impact of demography on consumer perceptions regarding counterfeit items. According to the study, sentiments towards the buying of counterfeit clothing were significantly predicted by age, income, lower income and less educational attainment. More younger, poorer off, education were more likely to buy fake apparel. O'Cass and Frost's (2002) Australian study discovered that opinions on fake goods were affected by many elements, such as social influence, product quality judgments, and demographics. According to this survey, consumers who are younger, have lower incomes, and have less education are more prone to buy counterfeit goods. Furthermore, consumers were more likely to buy counterfeit goods if they thought real products were of poorer quality and if they were influenced by their peers. According to a Ha et al. (2019) study conducted in South Korea, views towards the buying of counterfeit clothing were significantly predicted by both gender and income. Particularly, buyers who were female and had lesser incomes had a higher propensity to buy fake apparel. This study also discovered that views about buying counterfeit clothing were influenced by consumer ideals like materialism and fashion consciousness. Lastly, a South Korean study by Lee et al. (2019) discovered that opinions regarding counterfeit goods, particularly apparel, were significantly predicted by one's degree of education. According to this study,

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consumers who had greater education had a reduced propensity to buy counterfeit goods, whereas those who had less education had a larger propensity.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Due to their reduced pricing, many customers in India and other countries are buying counterfeit apparel, which has become a major concern. Nevertheless, buying counterfeit apparel can have unfavorable effects, such as encouraging illicit activity and costing legitimate manufacturer’s money. As such, it's critical to understand the factors influencing consumers' opinions regarding the purchase of counterfeit clothing. The main objective of this study is to find out how demographics affect consumers' perceptions about purchasing counterfeit clothing in the Indian state of Punjab.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A structured questionnaire will be utilised to interview a sample of customers in the Indian state of Punjab in order to collect data for this study. The questionnaire will ask questions about age, gender, income, occupation, and level of education. With the use of this data, the important demographic factors influencing views towards the buying of counterfeit clothing were identified. For this study, the quantitative descriptive research design was used. 810 respondents' data were gathered for the current study using a

convenience sampling approach that also included purposive sampling. The information was supplied by respondents who have purchased at least one item of counterfeit apparel. Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Hoshiarpur were the most populous cities (Urban Development Ministry, Government of India, <https://www.punjabdata.com/Cities-in-Punjab.aspx>). A sample was selected from these six major cities of Punjab based on population. Version 20.0 of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to tabulate and analyses the primary data that was gathered for this one study.

5. OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION:

Based on the respondents' demographic profile shown in Table 1, 40.6% of the sample consisted of females and 59.4% of males. In the study sample, 41% of participants were single, whereas 59% of participants were married. Approximately 34.7% of all respondents were in the 18 to 25 age group, and 30.6% were in the 41 to 50 age group. Eighteen percent of the respondents were 51 years of age or older, and fifteen percent were between the ages of 26 and 40. The residential status of the respondents is again shown in Table 1. An equal number of respondents (16.7%) from each of the chosen cities—Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Hoshiarpur—were and Hoshiarpur—an equal percentage of respondents (16.7%) were chosen to get equal representation of respondents.

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Table 1: Frequency Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers

		Count	Column N %
City	Ludhiana	135	16.7%
	Amritsar	135	16.7%
	Jalandhar	135	16.7%
	Patiala	135	16.7%
	Bathinda	135	16.7%
	Hoshiarpur	135	16.7%
Gender	Male	481	59.4%
	Female	329	40.6%
Marital Status	Single	332	41%
	Married	478	59%
Age	18 - 25 yrs.	281	34.7%
	26 - 40 yrs.	128	15.8%



	41 - 50 yrs.	248	30.6%
	51 yrs. and above	153	18.9%
Qualification	10+2	173	21.4%
	Graduation	256	31.6%
	Post-graduation	331	40.86%
	PhD	50	6.17%
Annual Income	Less than 2 lakh	132	16.3
	2-5 lakh	141	17.4
	6-10 lakh	173	21.4
	11-20 lakh	139	17.2
	Above 20 lakh	77	9.5
	Dependent on family members	148	18.3

Among the 810 respondents, 40.86 percent held a post-graduate degree, while 31.6% of respondents were graduates. Of the responders, around 6.17% had completed a doctorate, and 21.4% had completed senior secondary schooling. Additionally, roughly 21.4% of the respondents stated they made between Rs. 6 and Rs. 10 lakhs, with 17.4%

reporting an income between Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 lakhs. 9.5% of respondents made more than 20 lakhs, while 17.2% of respondents made between 11 and 20 lakhs. 18.3% of the respondents relied on their family members to make all of their purchases, while 16.3% of respondents earned less than two lacs.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test on the basis of Gender and Marital Status

Demographic variable		Means	T- Value	Df	Sig-value (2 tailed)
Gender	Male	3.1811	.933	808	.351
	Female	3.1466			
Marital Status	Single	3.2321	2.833	796	.005
	Married	3.1264			

The gender mean values are shown in Table 2 for the purpose of examining the consumers' attitudes on the buying of fake garments. There is no gender difference in the mean values (Male=3.18, Female=3.14) regarding the attitude towards buying counterfeit garments. The way that men and women feel about these clothes is the same. An additional independent t-test was used, and the outcomes demonstrate that the group means are not statistically substantially different at the 5% level of significance because the p value (.351) is greater than the 0.05

threshold. We can draw the conclusion that men and women view buying fake garments in the same way. Both are equally concerned about their brands, and in order to satisfy those desires at a discount, they are equally likely to turn to fake garments. Additionally the mean values of various marital status groups exhibit slight variations, suggesting that their perspectives on counterfeit garments vary slightly. Compared to married people, single people are more accepting of these clothes.

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Table 3: ANOVA Results for Attitude towards Counterfeit Apparels

Demographic variable		Means	F Value	Sig-value (2 tailed)
Age	18 - 25 years	3.2550	6.503	.000
	26 - 40 years	3.2214		
	41 - 50 years	3.0977		
	51 years and above	3.0726		
Qualification	10+2	3.2845	4.542	.004



	Graduation	3.1224		
	Post-graduation	3.1581		
	Ph.D.	3.0534		
Annual Income	Less than 2 lakh	3.0159	5.925	.000
	2-5 lakh	3.2563		
	6-10 lakh	3.1726		
	11-20 lakh	3.1850		
	Above 20 lakh	3.0432		
	Dependent on family members	3.4965		

The average findings across age groups indicate a slight variation in attitudes on fake clothing. The only pattern we can identify is that customers' attitudes change after the age of forty-one, as people become fewer brands conscious and more mature as they age. Customers between the ages of 18 and 25 and 26 and 40 are more accepting of these fake clothes than are those between the ages of 41 and 50 and those 51 and older. Once more, the mean values of various income categories demonstrate that there is minimal variation in the attitudes of different income levels towards counterfeit apparels. The attitudes of dependent and low income (less than 2 lakhs, 2-5 lakhs, 5-10 lacs) and high-income (10-20 lakhs and over 20 lacs) groups about counterfeit apparels differ. When compared to consumers with incomes between 10-20 lakhs and above 20 lakhs, those who depend on family members and have modest incomes have a substantially higher attitude towards purchasing counterfeit clothing. It can be the case that people with low incomes are unable to afford expensive authentic products, and therefore have a relatively negative attitude towards counterfeit clothing. The disparities between the mean values of the various education levels indicate that the groups' attitude on the purchase of counterfeit clothing varies. Less qualified respondents exhibit a more upbeat attitude than graduates, postgraduates, or doctorates. Doctorates, which possess the highest level of education, view this as an unethical practice and instead favour original brands.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study discovered that sentiments towards buying counterfeit apparel were significantly predicted by a number of demographic

characteristics. Positive opinions on counterfeit apparel were more prevalent among younger consumers as well as those with lower incomes and educational levels. The survey found a number of explanations for why Punjabi customers in India buy fake apparel. These included the notion that fake clothing is just as good as real clothing, as well as factors like price and ease of use. According to the survey, companies can use targeted demographics in their marketing and advertising initiatives to deter people from buying fake apparel. For instance, research 5 finds that younger consumers with lesser incomes are more likely to purchase counterfeit clothing. By concentrating on these consumers and highlighting the disadvantages of purchasing clothing made of fake materials, businesses may be able to reduce the demand for counterfeit items. The study suggests that policy makers could reduce the market for counterfeit goods by informing customers about the risks associated with purchasing phone products. To educate the public about the risks of counterfeit goods and the importance of making morally and responsibly informed purchases, legislators should, for instance, launch public awareness campaigns. Further studies could look into the existence of comparable patterns in other Indian regions or in other countries with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

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