

## An Empirical Investigation on the Impact of Consumer Attitudes On Purchase Intentions for Counterfeit Clothing in Punjab

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62

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## Abstract

The primary goal of the current study is to better understand how consumer attitudes affect people's inclinations to buy fake apparel in the Indian state of Punjab. The study's specific goal is to give readers a thorough grasp of the elements that influence Punjabi customers' perceptions of fake clothing and their intents to buy it. The study's methodology was quantitative. In order to gather information from a sample of 810 customers in the Indian State of Punjab, the study used a survey questionnaire. The results of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics like means and frequencies and the t test. The study excluded other parts of India and solely included the State of Punjab in India. This restricts the findings' applicability to other parts of the nation. Policymakers, brand owners, and marketers may find the study's practical implications helpful in devising strategies to address the problem of counterfeit clothing and safeguard consumers' and businesses' interests. The results of this study can help policymakers understand how important it is to raise consumer awareness of the dangers of buying fake clothes. The study's findings can be used by policymakers to create awareness programs that emphasize the drawbacks of buying fake goods. The State of Punjab in India, which has a distinct cultural and economic context, is the subject of this study. The study offers important insights into the elements that affect consumer behavior in a particular setting by evaluating customer attitudes toward counterfeit clothes in this region.

Keywords: Consumer attitudes, Counterfeit clothing, Ethical concerns, Purchase behaviour, Customer perception

## 1. Introduction

Clothing items that imitate an original brand but are sold under a different brand name or without a brand name at all are referred to as counterfeit clothes. The makers of the original brand are under considerable threat from the explosive growth of the fake clothing business in recent years (Cass, 2001). Numerous research have examined how consumers feel about buying counterfeit clothing since consumer sentiments have a big impact on how much of these products are demanded. Punjab, a state in India, is well-known for its robust market for counterfeit clothing, making it the perfect place to investigate how consumer attitudes affect consumers' intents to buy counterfeit clothing (Chaudhry & Stumpf, 2011). This study attempts to examine the impact of three factors—ethical beliefs, brand awareness, and word of mouth—on customers' perceptions about buying counterfeit clothing in Punjab. Consumers' moral convictions regarding the purchasing of fake goods are referred to as ethical values (Chen et al., 2017). Brand consciousness is the awareness of and attachment to a specific brand or set of brands among customers (Jirotmontree, 2013). The influence of other people's opinions, suggestions, or experiences on consumers' purchase decisions is referred to as word of mouth (Yang, 2009). This project will advance knowledge of how these factors affect Punjabi consumers' views toward buying counterfeit clothing by performing an empirical analysis. A survey questionnaire and a quantitative research methodology will be used in the study to gather data.

## 2. Review Of Literature And Research Gap

The demand for counterfeit clothing is significantly influenced by customer sentiments, which is an increasing concern in the fashion industry. Numerous research have looked at the connection between customer attitudes and intentions to buy counterfeit clothing. Hwang and Kim (2019) did a study to better understand how consumers' ethical perceptions and brand awareness affect their willingness to buy luxury counterfeit clothing. According to the study, brand awareness positively increased purchase intentions whereas ethical views had the opposite effect. Similar to this, Tran and Nguyen's (2019) study looked at how consumers' perceptions against fake fashion items affected their propensity to buy. According to the study, consumers who had less favorable sentiments toward products that were fake were less likely to make purchases. Al-Mubarak and Busler (2018) studied the influence of social influence on customers' opinions toward luxury counterfeit clothing in a different study. According to the study, social influence significantly affected consumers' perceptions of and intentions to buy fake designer clothing. Islam et al. (2019) looked into how customers' perceptions of risk affected their views toward counterfeit clothing in their study. The study discovered that customers had more negative sentiments about these products and exhibited lower purchase intentions when they felt there was a bigger danger involved with buying counterfeit clothing. Furthermore, a study by Moon et al. (2019) looked into how consumers' perceptions of the quality of a product affected their attitudes about counterfeit clothing. According to the study, customers exhibited less favorable sentiments regarding these products and less buy intentions when they believed that counterfeit clothing was of lower quality. Finally, Chen et al.'s (2020) study looked at how consumer word-of-mouth affected how they felt about replica luxury clothing. The study discovered that consumer opinions about replica luxury clothing and their intentions to make purchases were significantly influenced by word-of-mouth.

Despite the rising collection of studies on the influence of consumer attitudes on intentions to buy counterfeit clothing, little is known about the particular Punjab, India, environment. Although studies have looked into the desire for counterfeit clothing in several areas and nations, the particular cultural, social, and economic aspects in Punjab may have a different impact on customer sentiments. Therefore, empirical research with a particular focus on Punjab is required to comprehend how customer perceptions influence purchase intentions for fake clothing in this area. Additionally, while earlier research has looked at the effects of several factors like moral convictions, brand knowledge, and word of mouth on customer sentiments toward counterfeit clothing, A deeper comprehension of these factors and their relative weight in influencing Punjabi consumers' opinions about fake clothing is required. By examining the influence of ethical convictions, brand consciousness, and word of mouth on customer attitudes toward counterfeit clothes in Punjab, India, this study intends to fill these research gaps.

### **3. Statement Of Problem And Objectives Of The Study**

Punjab, India is not an exception to the growing issue of fake clothing in the fashion sector. Punjab is seeing an increase in the production of fake clothing, which is hurting both the original brand manufacturers and the general economy. The market for these products is significantly shaped by customer perceptions of counterfeit clothing. Regarding the influence of consumer views on purchase intentions of counterfeit clothing, particularly in the setting of Punjab, India, there is a research deficit. In order to curb the demand for counterfeit clothing in Punjab, India, this study will look into how consumer attitudes affect people's buy intentions for that type of clothing. It will also give recommendations for original brand manufacturers and policymakers.

### **4. Research Methodology**

A structured questionnaire will be used to gather data from a sample of consumers in the Indian state of Punjab. This questionnaire will ask about demographics including age, gender, income, education, and occupation. This study used a quantitative descriptive research methodology. In the current study, data from 810 respondents were gathered using a convenience sample technique that also included purposive sampling. Respondents who had at least one purchase of a counterfeit item of clothing were the ones who provided the data. Based on population, a sample of six major Punjabi cities was chosen, with Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Hoshiarpur ranking as the most populous (Urban Development Ministry, Government of India, <https://www.punjabdata.com/Cities-in-Punjab.aspx>). The primary data for this investigation were compiled and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20.0 and Smart PLS 3.

### **5. Results And Discussions**

According to table 1's demographic breakdown of the respondents, the sample as a whole was made up of 40.6% women and 59.4% men. 41 percent of the study's sample was made up of single people, while 59 percent were married. The age group of 18 to 25 years included about 34.7% of all responses, followed by the age group of 41 to 50 years (30.6%). 15.8 percent of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 40, while 18.9 percent of respondents were beyond the age of 51. Table 1 once more displays the respondents' residential status, with an almost similar number of respondents (16.7%) chosen from each of the chosen cities (Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Hoshiarpur).

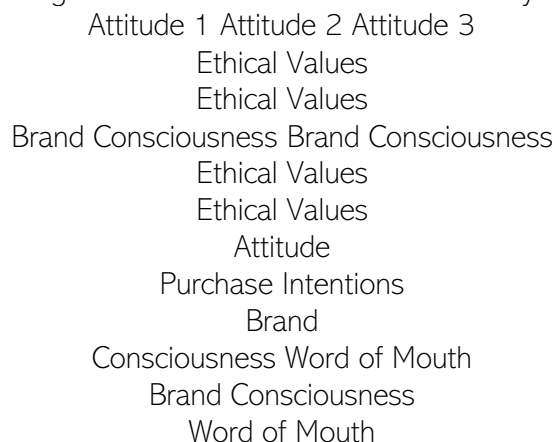
Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Profile of Consumers

		Count	Column N %
Gender	Male	241	59.4%
	Female	164	40.6%
Marital Status	Single	166	41%
	Married	239	59%
Age	18 - 25 years	141	34.7%
	26 - 40 years	64	15.8%
	41 - 50 years	124	30.6%
	51 years and above	76	18.9%
Qualification	10+2	86	21.4%
	Graduation	128	31.6%
	Post-graduation	165	40.6%
	Ph.D.	26	6.4%
	Less than 2 lakhs	66	16.3

Annual Income	2-5 lakhs	70	17.4
	6-10 lakhs	87	21.4
	11-20 lakhs	69	17.2
	Above 20 lakhs	39	9.5
	Dependent on family members	74	18.3

Post-graduate respondents made up 40.6% of the 810 total respondents, while graduates (31.6%) made up the remainder. A little over 6.4 percent of respondents had earned a doctorate, and 21.4% had completed their senior secondary education. A further 21.4% of respondents reported having an income between Rs 6 and 10 lakhs, followed by those with an income between Rs 2 and 5 lakhs (17.4%). 17.2 percent of respondents reported incomes between 11 and 20 lakhs, and 9.5 percent reported incomes of over 20 lakhs. 18.3% of respondents were reliant on their family members to make any purchases, while 16.3% of respondents had income in the category of less than \$2 lacs. Partial Least Square (PLS) has been used as a statistical approach to analyze customer attitudes regarding counterfeit clothing. The original model comprised nine reflective assessment variables for three distinct constructs: word-of-mouth (Imran Anwar Mir, 2011), brand consciousness (Riquelene et al., 2012), and ethical ideals (validated scale by Field, 2003). The impact of these three independent variables is examined first with regard to customer attitudes regarding counterfeit clothing (scale developed by Ha and Lennon in 2010) and then with regard to attitudes toward purchase intentions (scale developed by De Matos et al. in 2007).

Figure 1: Model Framework of the Study



Word of Mouth  
Word of Mouth

Purchase Intentions Purchase Intentions Purchase Intentions Purchase Intentions  
Factor loadings, the average variance explained (AVE), and the composite reliability were all examined to determine the validity and reliability of the constructs in this study. Factor loadings above 0.7 are regarded as appropriate, whereas those below 0.4 should be deleted, according to Henseler et al. (2009). If deleting them results in an increase in composite reliability and AVE, loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 can be taken into consideration for deletion. A construct should have an AVE value above 0.5, which denotes that it accounts for more than half of the variance in its indicators. In a similar vein, a composite reliability rating above 0.7 is advised, signifying a higher degree of build reliability. All factor loadings, AVE, and composite reliability values in this investigation were discovered to be higher than the advised thresholds, demonstrating the constructs' strong convergent validity and dependability. As a result, the measurement methodology used in this study can be regarded as legitimate and trustworthy for examining purchase intentions.

Table 2: Analysis of Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach Alpha	R square
Attitude	Attitude 1	0.776	0.645	0.883	0.747	0.674
	Attitude 2	0.822				
	Attitude 3	0.814				
Brand Consciousness	Brand Consciousness 1	0.837	0.628	0.761	0.761	
	Brand Consciousness 2	0.972				
	Brand Consciousness 3	0.827				
Ethical Values	Ethical Values1	0.921	0.5464	0.862	0.891	
	Ethical Values 2	0.785				
	Ethical Values 3	0.803				

Purchase Intention	Purchase Intention 1	0.847	0.691	0.927	0.895	0.794
	Purchase Intention 2	0.892				
	Purchase Intention 3	0.795				
	Purchase Intention 4	0.848				

The purchase intention's R-square value is 0.794, which indicates that 79.4% of the variation in the consumers' purchase intention was explained by all independent variables' effects on attitude, with the remaining 20.6% attributed to other independent variables not included in the model and random error.

Figure 2: Testing Hypotheses and Path Coefficients



In Fornell-Larcker's criterion was employed in this study to evaluate discriminant validity. According to Table 3, discriminant validity is demonstrated because the square root of the AVE values for each construct is higher than the sum of any two inter-item correlations between latent variables. The values on the diagonal, in particular, are higher than the values in the adjacent rows and columns. This study's constructs are distinct and measure particular characteristics of consumer behavior, therefore it can be said that they satisfy the requirement for discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity Analysis

	AT	BC	EV	WOM	PI
Attitude (AT)	0.770				



<b>Brand Consciousness (BC)</b>	0.125	0.787			
<b>Ethical Values (EV)</b>	0.361	0.602	0.864		
<b>Word of Mouth (WOM)</b>	0.529	0.517	0.655	0.847	
<b>Purchase Intention (PI)</b>	0.158	0.425	0.402	0.503	0.852

In Smart PLS 3, the bootstrapping approach is once more employed to determine the standard error value. We utilize 2,000 samples with the 500 examples to do bootstrapping. Bootstrapping was used to create the t-value that accompanied each path coefficient, as shown in Table 4. To determine the significance of the coefficient, standard error was employed. If the t-value for a certain error probability is higher than the critical value, the coefficient is regarded as significant. The crucial value for the two-tails test is 1.96 at the significance level of 0.05 that we used for this investigation.

Table 4: Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Std. Beta</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>t- value</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>
Brand Consciousness -> Attitude	0.148	0.03	4.71	Supported	H1
Ethical Values -> Attitude	0.049	0.03	1.48	Rejected	H2

Attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.009	0.06	3.81	Supported	H4
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The study looked at four hypotheses on how customer behavior and attitudes regarding counterfeit clothing relate to one another. The findings supported three of the four assumptions. The results supported hypotheses H1 and H3 by showing that brand awareness and word-of-mouth had a favorable and substantial link with attitude toward counterfeit clothing. This implies that customers are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward counterfeiting if they cannot buy pricey genuine items or feel that counterfeit products provide the same satisfaction as the real ones. Additionally, people are more likely to see counterfeiting favorably if they constantly discuss it with their friends and acquaintances. Contrary to hypothesis H2, ethical principles had no discernible influence on customers' attitudes toward counterfeit clothing. This implies that despite prioritizing ethical ideals in their purchasing decisions, customers may still be influenced by other considerations like cost or availability to buy counterfeit goods. Additionally, the study discovered that attitude has a favorable and substantial influence on the intents to buy counterfeit clothing. Customers that have a favorable attitude about counterfeiting are more likely to have greater purchase intentions for fake clothing, and the opposite is also true. These results are in line with other studies on customer attitudes and behavior toward fake goods (e.g., Lee & Workman, 2012; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018).

The study emphasizes the intricate relationship between consumer attitudes and behavior toward fake clothing, which is impacted by a number of variables including cost, accessibility, and social influence.

## 6. Conclusions And Implications For Management

According to the study's findings, brand awareness and word-of-mouth have a considerable favorable influence on customers' views about counterfeit clothing, however ethical principles have little of an effect. Furthermore, sentiments about counterfeit clothing have a large favorable influence on buyers' inclinations to buy such clothing. For managers in the fashion sector, particularly those who deal with fake clothing, these results offer invaluable information. Managers should first consider how aware their customers are of their brands. Customers who care about brands but cannot afford to purchase pricey authentic items are more likely to be supportive of counterfeit clothing. Managers may thus want to introduce product lines that are reasonably priced or work with designers to draw in this market. Second, buyers' perceptions of counterfeit clothing are significantly influenced by word-of mouth. Managers should use influencer marketing and social media to promote their brands and goods, as well as interact with customers to learn about their wants and preferences. Thirdly, despite the fact that this study's findings suggest that ethical values did not significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward counterfeit clothing, managers should

continue to work to advance these principles and inform the public about the value of IP rights and the harm that counterfeiting causes to the economy, society, and environment.

Finally, managers should take action to deter counterfeiting and safeguard their intellectual property rights since attitudes about counterfeit clothing have a large beneficial influence on consumers' intents to purchase counterfeit clothing. This can entail using anti-counterfeiting technology, collaborating with law enforcement, and instructing customers on how to spot fake goods. Future studies may investigate the existence of such tendencies in other parts of India or in nations with various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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