

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARD COUNTERFEIT COSMETIC PRODUCTS: A CASE OF BILASPUR TOWN IN HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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Abstract: This study examines customers attitude for purchasing counterfeit cosmetic products. We studied the influence of personality and socio- economic factors on attitude. Data were collected from a sample of 598 respondents using a well-established questionnaire. Hypotheses were tested by utilizing multiple regression, exploratory factor analysis was used to evaluate customers attitude towards counterfeit cosmetic products. We have found that more price and value conscious, novelty seeker and seek status of famous brands one was, the more positive was an individual's attitude towards fake goods. Findings revealed that selling as well as buying of counterfeit products is a crime and consumer attraction towards phony goods is directly proportional to their price. Socio-economic characteristics were also important in influencing attitude. Results demonstrated that education and lower income groups play a vital role in influencing consumers attitude. Conclusively, attitude with respect to counterfeit products was significant in influencing intention to purchase.

Keywords: Consumer attitude, counterfeit products, factor loading, personal and socio-economic factors, purchase intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Now a day's purchasing of counterfeit products has become one of the major issues for genuine brand manufacturers. Making of copies that are indistinguishable in packaging, comprising of labeling and trade mark, replicated in such a manner so as to look like to a customer as original product (Kay, 1990). Counterfeiting is becoming a serious threat and invading in number of industries. Nash (1989) identified that it influences goods which need a distinguished level of marketing and R&D in addition, author analyzed that phenomenon of counterfeit manufacturing and sale of such products, influences brand image, decreasing R&D costs, hitting revenues and number of industries. As per data released by Frontier Economics based on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2016, counterfeiting and piracy businesses hurt the original brand makers and are losing 923 billion dollars to 1.13 trillion dollars and it is forecasted to propagate from 1.90 trillion dollars to 2.81 trillion in 2022 if it continues to grow at same pace. Though, some of studies categorize product counterfeiting as a victimless offense (Freedman, 1999), but influences of this upon market are complex. Counterfeit products may offer symbolic advantages such as providing social status for

customers at a smaller price and not up to par quality (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000; Yoo & Lee; 2009). From customers viewpoint, counterfeiting has become significant phenomenon for consumers of genuine articles, who may face compromised difference (Commuri, 2009) and from marketing point of view, counterfeiting phenomenon has become an important issue due to its unconstructive consequences for the performance of the brands experiencing the violation (Bloch *et al.*, 1993; Cordell *et al.*, 1996; Grossman & Shapiro 1988). For legitimate product manufacturers, replica can affect billions of dollars, hurt the market and economy by causing trade scarcity and also have adverse effect on government in the form of loss of tax revenue and corruption and backing the criminal activities through financial support respectively (Ang *et al.*, 2001; Tom *et al.*, 1998; Vitlhani, 2007). As counterfeiting violates the norms of Intellectual Property Rights therefore it has adversarial influence on brand building and expansion of new products (Feinberg & Roussslang, 1990; Nill & Schultz, 1996). Product imitation hurts the fame of brands and results in losses in form of sales and it can deteriorate the name and value of the brand which takes many years to develop which is one of the substantial assets of the business (Bloch *et al.*, 1993; Green & Tasman, 2002).

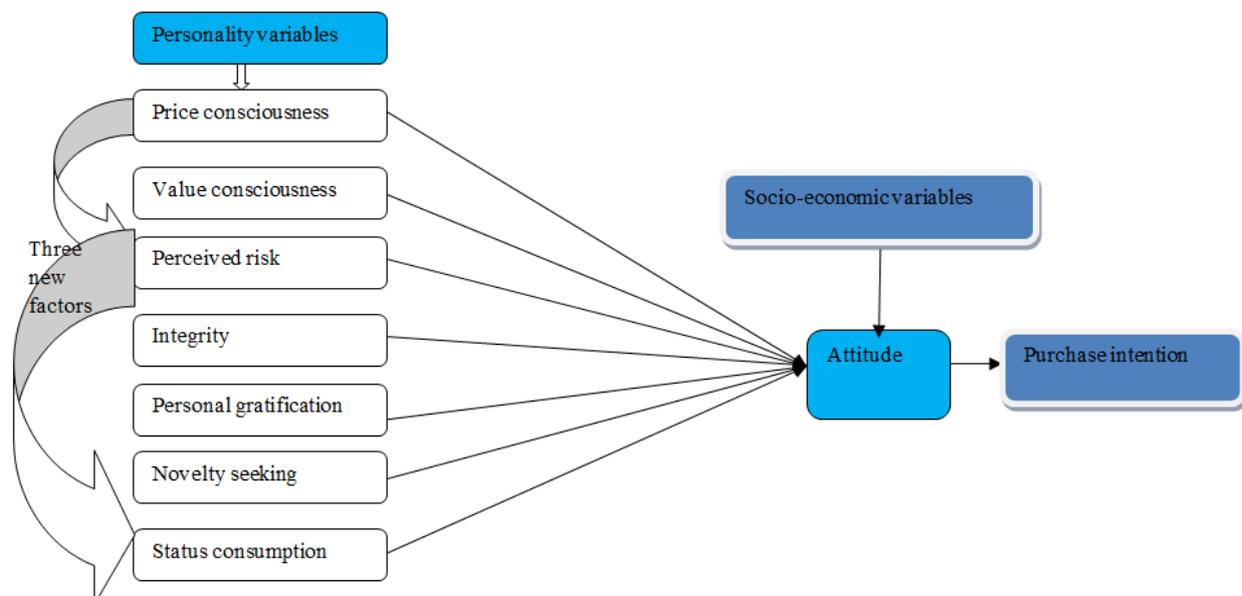
As present study emphasis upon buying of counterfeit cosmetic products from the consumers viewpoint particularly considering the antecedents of the construct “Attitude toward counterfeit cosmetic products”. Goal of the current research is to test a model that deals with the major factors which affect customers attitude and purchase intention.

The current study is elucidated in following parts. Initially a concise review of the major antecedents and outcomes of the purchasers’ attitude were scrutinized, resulting in a theoretical model to be examined. Secondly, appropriate scales for the constructs deemed in the model were categorized. Further, the supposed model was analyzed with the help of multiple regression and factor analysis. Moreover, a discussion of the major findings is presented and gauging results with the earlier studies conducted by the authors earlier. Finally, conclusions and managerial implications are discussed in detail.

The main objectives of this study are: -

1. Find out the influence of personality factors on customers attitude.
2. To study the influence of socio-economic variables on attitude of customers.

Therefore, on the basis of following predictors personal factors were constituted and attitude plays a mediator among personality factors and purchase intention as mentioned in figure 1.



(Fig. 1, Source: - Research model adapted from (Ang *et al.*, 2001; Wang *et al.* 2005).

Model presented in figure 1, extended from Ang *et al.*, (2001) and Wang *et al.*, (2005). Though in this study we have considered personality factors and socio-economic factors. Three new determinants (price consciousness, perceived risk and status consumption) were added in the model on the basis of previous studies conducted by various authors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the customers attitude assisted us to find main reasons of fake products purchase intention. They are discussed below: -

2.1 Customers attitude

Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) described Personality as “*how an individual react with in its surroundings*”. Whereas Blyth (2008) said that personality is “*what makes the people unique and what facilitates them in controlling the association between their external environmental aspects and their internal responses*”.

Further, “*Attitude is a learned tendency/disposition to act in a consistently unfavorable or favorable way regarding to a specified object*” (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). According to Huang *et al.*, (2004) attitude is a “*Knowledgeable propensity to response to a situation in a favorable or unfavorable manner*”. Attitude is supposed to be highly associated with an individual’s intentions, which indeed is a reasonable predictor of a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). These authors have suggested that attitude is not only a construct which an individual has towards an object will influence their intentions toward it, but their reference group will also have some significant influence on their intentions, specifically subjective norms. In a brief, intentions to carry out a behavior will be affected by personal and social factors. Furthermore, Yau and Sin (2003) pointed out that integrity and social cost have negative influence towards purchase intention. Also, Huang *et al.*, (2004) proposed that risk averseness and price quality inference have negative impact on customers attitude towards gray market products. In addition, Yoo (2005) suggested that buyers of genuine products do not have firm intention to buy counterfeit products but when price information was available the option to buy original products was reducing. Su (2006) recommended that the customers who purchase imitations of genuine brands were strongly influenced by price and store image. Further, De Matos *et al.*, (2007) identified the mediator role of attitude between its antecedents and behavioral intention and reported that customer’s intentions to purchase counterfeit products are dependent on their attitudes which indeed are affected by perceived risk, previous experience, subjective norm, integrity, personal gratification and price-quality inference while Veloutsou and Bian (2008) determined that perceived risk had significant impact on counterfeit purchase intention. Moreover, Nordin (2009) referred that novelty seeking, perceived risk, price consciousness and normative susceptibility were the major constructs which influence customer’s attitudes towards counterfeit products and attitude also have a significant impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, Asli (2010) revealed that value consciousness, information susceptibility and normative susceptibility do not have any significant influence on customer’s attitudes and authors Ayupp and Ismail (2011) specified that value consciousness, personal gratification, information and normative susceptibility have a negative impact on customer’s attitudes towards counterfeit products. Also, Budiman (2012) found that intrinsic and status consumption have favorable attitude towards counterfeit products and influences the purchase intention. In addition, Hanzaae and Taghipourian (2012) illustrated that risk averseness and perceived risk have negative significant influence on attitude but attitude is positively associated with behavioral intention. Furthermore, Albarq (2013) has shown the mediator role of attitude with respect to its antecedents and purchase intention and reported that factors such as integrity, past experience, personal experience, price- quality inference and subjective norm have some significant influence on purchase intention in addition Ahmad *et al.*, (2014) identified the direct influence of peer pressure, prior experience, price consciousness and attitude on purchase intention towards counterfeit mobile phones. Also Basu *et al.*, (2015) indicated the influence of personal gratification, perception, social motivation, value, integrity and brand loyalty on purchase intention whereas Karpova (2016) revealed that value consciousness, past experiences, product design and normative susceptibility have direct impact on customer’s attitudes. Moreover, Kala and Chaubey (2017) suggested that status influence, subjective norm and lower price play vital role in influencing purchase intention. Bhatia (2018) found that value conscious, brand conscious, perception of low risk and low income group have a significant influence on attitude of customers. In present study, attitude plays mediator role among personal factors and behavioral intention.

Therefore, on the basis of previous existing literature review we have classified these predictors in the form of personal factors which influence attitude.

Therefore, subsequent hypotheses were framed as accordingly to the nature of the objectives: -

1H₀: There is no significant relationship between personality factors and attitude.

1H₀₁: There is no significant association between price consciousness and attitude.

1H₀₂: There is no significant relationship among value consciousness and attitude.

1H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between perceived risk and attitude.

1H₀₄: There is no significant association among integrity and attitude.

1H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between personal gratification and attitude.

1H₀₆: There is no significant association among novelty seeking and attitude.

1H₀₇: There is no significant relationship between status consumption and attitude.

1H_{0b}: There is no significant association among attitude and purchase intention.

2H₀: There is no significant relationship between socio- economic variables and attitude.

2H₀₁: There is no significant association among gender and attitude.

2H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between age and attitude.

2H₀₃: There is no significant association among education and attitude.

2H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between income and attitude.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire used was designed according to related review of literatures and on the basis of opinions of experts and was comprised of two sections. The first section was intended to know about the socio-economic characteristics (gender, age, education and income) of each respondent and second section comprised of 23 statements related to all the 7 predictors used in the study. All the items were evaluated by using Likert five-point scale from (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree). Determinants of the personality constructs were adapted from Tom *et al.*, (1998), Nordin (2009) and Mir *et al.*, (2012).

3.2 Sampling method

The respondents were customers who purchased counterfeit cosmetic product. The participants were drawn from different areas of Bilaspur town and the data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. A survey was carried out among 598 respondents which were selected conveniently. Above mentioned town has been divided into 11 wards and among each ward 60 questionnaires were distributed. Therefore, out of 660 questionnaires 616 were returned and of these 598 were usable. Hence, a total of 598 responses were deemed fit for data analysis through SPSS software 20.0 version.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile of the respondents was as following. 343 (57.4%) were female. In terms of age 257 (43%) were between 21-30 years, 155 (25.9%) were between 31-40 years, years and 27 (4.5%) were among 51-60 years. In terms of education, 274 (45.8%) were graduate followed by those who have post-graduation 174 (29.1). Majority 204 (34.1 %) have monthly income less than Rs. 20,000 followed by those 199 (33.3%) who have family monthly income between Rs. 20,001- Rs. 40,000. Table-1 depicts socio-economic profile of respondents.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Age	Frequency	Education	Frequency	Income	Frequency
Male	255	Below 21 yrs	86	Matriculation	26	Less than Rs. 20,000	204
Female	343	21-30 yrs	257	Intermediate	111	Rs.20,001- Rs.40,000	199
Total = 598		31-40 yrs	155	Graduate	274	Rs.40,001- Rs.60,000	122
		41-50 yrs	73	Post graduate	174	Rs.60,001- Rs.80,000	44
		51-60 yrs	27	Ph.D.	13	More than Rs.80,000	29

4.1 Measurement model of attitude

Multiple regression was used to analyze the relationship between personality factors, attitude, and to study the relationship between attitude and purchase intention. Attitude acts as mediating variable. First, to evaluate the extent of consistency between construct measures, reliability of the predictors is tested through Cronbach alpha. The value of Cronbach's α , average of five measures of attitude is 0.67 and three variables of purchase intention is 0.65, which depicts a consistency of construct measures. Moreover, α value for personality factors are mentioned in table 4. This revealed that all predictors' α coefficients were higher than 0.60 which exhibits sound reliability of measures (Nunnally, 1967; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table-2 illustrates the coefficients of determinations (R^2), t- value and significance level of the numerous factors. The results and discussion of the study are revealed below:-

Table 2: Final Multiple regression analysis on factors influencing attitude

Independent variables	Beta (β)	t- Value	Significance level	Collinearity statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.995	11.858	0.000		
Price Consciousness	0.074	2.194	0.029*	0.984	1.017
Value Consciousness	0.087	2.536	0.011*	0.933	1.071
Perceived Risk	-0.018	-0.698	0.485	0.854	1.172
Integrity	-0.224	-4.117	0.000*	0.874	1.144
Personal Gratification	-0.052	-1.053	0.293	0.840	1.191
Novelty Seeking	0.060	2.178	0.030*	0.747	1.339
Status Consumption	0.305	12.974	0.000*	0.812	1.232
Dependent variable	Attitude				
Notes	R^2	0.33			
	Adjusted R^2	0.32			

* Significant at 5% level of significance

From table-2 it is observed that five factors viz. (price consciousness, value consciousness, integrity, novelty seeking and status consumption) were found as significant determinants in influencing customer attitude. Therefore, $1H_{01}$, $1H_{02}$, $1H_{04}$, $1H_{06}$ and $1H_{07}$ were rejected and $1H_{03}$ and $1H_{05}$ accepted. Findings of present study illustrated that more often, respondents check the price before purchasing and they do not have any distinct view about attraction towards nominal priced fake products. Participants admitted that they buy imitated goods when the genuine ones are highly priced. Whereas customers are more concerned regarding price, quality and value of the product respectively. Findings have also shown that when a fake product has an obvious price benefit over the authentic product, customers will prefer the imitated product. The result from this study are consistent with the previous findings (Bloch *et al.*, 1993; Ang *et al.*, 2001; Wang *et al.*, 2005; Phau and Teah, 2009; Kim and Karpova, 2010) and validates that price and value consciousness influence customers attitude and personal gratification do not affect attitude. Perceived risk have no significant impact on attitude and is supported by De Matos *et al.*, (2007). Further, integrity, novelty seeking and status consumption were found as important interpretive variables in influencing customers attitude. Individuals who value integrity were less willing to purchase counterfeits as compare to those customers who do not have exhibit probity which validates previous findings (Cordell *et al.*, 1996; Ang *et al.*, 2001; Phau and Teah, 2009). Furthermore, outcomes of our study ascertained that customers would like to purchase counterfeit products having status of big and illustrious brands, also those individuals who seek newness and variety would like to prefer counterfeit products. This finding validates with (Wee *et al.*, 1995; Budiman 2012). Further, Table-3 highlights the influence of attitude on purchase intention.

Table 3: Final Multiple regression analysis on attitudinal measures influencing purchase intention

Independent variable	Beta (β)	t- Value	Significance level	Collinearity statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.254	1.777	0.076		
Attitude	0.914	19.659	0.000*	1.000	1.000
Dependent variable: Purchase intention					
Notes	R ²	0.39			
	Adjusted R ²	0.39			

* Significant at 5% level of significance

Table-3 indicates that for the total sample predictor attitude accounted for a R² of 0.393 of the purchase intention. Also, analysis suggested that attitude ($p = 0.000$, $p \leq 0.05$) is an important determinant of purchase intention which accounts for 67% of the variance. Hence, H_{0b} is rejected. More positive an individual's attitude towards counterfeit products, higher was the intention to purchase and vice versa. This finding is consistent with other studies conducted by (Ang *et al.*, 2001, Phau and Teah, 2009).

4.2 An exploratory factor analysis on consumers multi-attribute attitude to counterfeit cosmetic products

Twenty-three statements were used in testing consumer attitude and an exploratory study was performed to identify embedding structure of attitude. These measures form simpler and basic attitudinal structure and help academics to understand customers. An exploratory factor analysis was performed to test attributes of customers attitude. Significance level of KMO on attitude measures is 0.697 and the Bartlett's test is 0.000. The principle component extraction method with rotation (varimax) is used. Table-4 shows the factor analysis and factor loading below 0.45 can be neglected (Comrey and Lee, 1992). These seven personality constructs elucidate 68.42% of total variance.

Table 4: Factor analysis of attitudinal measures

Attitude measures	Factor loadings						
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Price consciousness (F1)							
PC1	0.892						
PC2	0.836						
PC3	0.847						
PC4	0.891						
Value consciousness (F2)							
VC1		0.760					
VC2		0.791					
VC3		0.746					
Perceived risk (F3)							
PR1			0.833				
PR2			0.775				
PR3			0.841				
Integrity (F4)							
INT1				0.797			
INT2				0.843			
INT3				0.758			
Personal gratification (F5)							
PG1					0.793		
PG2					0.587		
PG3					0.596		
PG4					0.699		

Novelty seeking (F6)							
NS1						0.800	
NS2						0.659	
NS3						0.806	
Status consumption (F7)							
SC1							0.797
SC2							0.813
SC3							0.799
Cronbach α	0.62	0.68	0.79	0.77	0.64	0.76	0.78
Method	Principal component extraction, Rotation-Varimax						

To study the influence socio-economic factors upon attitude multiple regression and cross tabulation were used. Table-5 exhibits the regression results: -

Table 5: Influence of socio-economic variables on attitude

Independent variables	Beta (β)	t value	Sig. level
Constant	2.664	0.000	1.000
Gender	-0.019	-0.479	0.632
Age	-0.061	-1.459	0.145
Education	0.081	2.001	0.046*
Income	0.221	5.380	0.000*
Dependent variable	Attitude		
Notes	R^2	0.05	
	Adjusted R^2	0.04	

* Significant at 5% level of significance

With reference to above table we concluded that attitude was positively influenced by education ($p = 0.046$, $p \leq 0.05$) this finding is not consistent with (Ang *et al.*, 2001; Kwong *et al.*, 2003, Edwards and Carpenter, 2014) and income ($p = 0.000$, $p \leq 0.05$) which reconfirm the previous studies conducted by (Ang *et al.*, 2001; Kumar *et al.*, 2016; Kala and Chaubey, 2017; Bhatia, 2018) whereas gender and age were not found as significant predictors of attitude and results are not supportive of the outcomes of other authors (Kwong *et al.*, 2003, Edwards and Carpenter, 2014). Therefore, hypotheses $2H_{01}$ and $2H_{02}$ were accepted whereas $2H_{03}$, $2H_{04}$ were rejected.

According to this study, in case of overall education groups from total sample, we have found that 53.2% of participants from education groups have concurred that most of the individuals check prices before purchasing forged products perpetually while 25.1% and 29.8% of the respondents do not agree upon high-priced of genuine products and attraction to low priced counterfeit products respectively. Further, 53.3% respondents were value conscious. Participants admitted that they were concerned about product characteristic, price and value. Moreover, 46% of respondents have agreed about high extent of risk involved in the form of (physical risk, monetary and social risk) when they buy spurious products and perceived that spending money upon simulated products is not worthwhile although 10.6% of respondents be at variance with this. In addition, results suggested that 56.5% of participants feel higher guilty when buying a phony product because customers feel that they value responsibility, self-control and honesty and are loyal towards society and law. Also findings connoted that 54.05% of individuals believe that most often they buy spurious products for sense of accomplishment, social recognition and personal gratification. In terms of novelty seeking, 40.9% of the respondents did not agree on account that they have various popular brands of counterfeit goods and were invariably first to try them whereas 15.2% have neutral response about the variables of novelty seeking antecedent. Furthermore, 32.4% of respondents have disagreed that they are interested to buy fake products and such products are more invaluable to them if they have high brand status appeal while 27.7% of respondents have agreed on account of this.

From income perspective, we found that 53.2% respondents from overall income groups admitted that most of persons often check prices before buying the product and 28.4% of suggested the neutrality of their response about attraction towards low price imitated products. Further, 80% of participants agreed that price of the product is a decent indicator of

its quality. Outcomes suggested that 53.3% of respondents give priority to the concept of value for money while buying products and 46% of respondents concurred that while buying spurious products amount of risk involved is higher whereas 10.6% of respondents were disagreed about this. Findings showed that 56.5% of participants feel that they value responsibility, honesty and self-control because of ethical implication involvement. Also, results of present study manifested that 56.3% of respondents having monthly income less than Rs. 20,000 agreed that at most of times they buy imitated products for personal gratification. They wish to fulfill desire to follow a higher living standard. In case of novelty seeking, 41% of participants didn't agree to the statement that they have various famous brands of fake products and are always the novel seekers to try new spurious goods whereas 15.2% of respondents do not have any definite opinion. Also, overall 32.4% of respondents from all the income groups were not interested to buy phony products having higher status appeal and admitted that counterfeit products were not so much valuable for them while 27.7% of participants have shown curiosity to buy counterfeit products having higher status in nearby future.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In this study, we have found some interesting findings which are given below: -

(1) It was quite interesting to note that buying of counterfeit products is also a crime. Though results from previous studies depicted that selling of counterfeit products is a crime, we have found a novel finding that purchasing of counterfeit products is also a crime. Because it deters our economy, loss of govt. revenue in the form of taxes etc.

(2) We have found more interesting inference that fake cosmetics are available in the markets in form of grading system such as (A grade, B grade and C grade). We have come to know that counterfeit cosmetics under A grade are as identical as genuine products. It is very difficult to distinguish between original products and A grade phony cosmetics. We can only identify them after usage or consumers who use original products for a long time can detect them. While, B grade counterfeit products were similar to legitimate products up to some extent. We can identify them on the basis of price i.e. available at discounted price), packaging, fragrance etc. In addition, imitated cosmetic falls under C grade are totally fake products and addresses of manufacturers are not clearly mentioned upon those products. Furthermore, (we have observed that original cosmetic products offer very less margin for discount and are very costly) this is a vital point for counterfeit product manufacturers.

Results indicated that customers who were more price and value conscious, have favorable attitude towards counterfeits. For legitimate product manufacturers, results described that makers should reduce the price of the products. Because people consider the prices charged for the genuine ones to be excessively high although the superior quality. Moreover, findings exhibited that the more integrity an individual held, more unfavorable was one's attitude towards illicit products. Anti-counterfeiting organizations can sponsor educational programs and aware the customer about violating IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) is a crime. The communication should be focus upon how such violation breaches rights and affects loss of revenue to authentic manufacturers of these rights. In addition, novelty seeking and status consumption were significant determinants of attitude. Outcomes illustrated that individuals like newness, seek variety and would like to buy spurious products of higher and famous brands. Original manufactures should also keep hawk eyes upon these factors.

Findings of the study also revealed that perceived risk and personal gratification were not a significant factor of attitude. Respondents did not perceive counterfeit products as a means to attain a pleasurable and comfortable life. Customers do not purchase them as a symbol of sense of accomplishment or of pleasure. Also ad campaigns should be organized and should aware people about amount of risk associated while consuming replica products.

Based on socio-economic factors, we have found that gender and age did not have significant influence on customers attitude in this study. More surprisingly, results described that less and better-literate consumers did not differ in their attitudes with reference to counterfeiting. Better educated customers would be more aware of and know better consequences arising from breaching infringement than their less educated counterparts. Also, lower income influences attitude towards imitated products. In conclusion, results depicted that attitude was a significant predictor of purchase intention. Customers who had a persuasive propensity toward counterfeit product were more probable to buy spurious goods themselves and would recommend to their friends, colleagues and family members.

Earlier numerous studies were conducted on this segment, present study probe the relationship between the four tiers of constructs included in the model. As the most significant determinants affecting customer attitude and purchase intention

can be easily determined through regression and as variables and factors were under development in this research for the counterfeit cosmetics study, the presented model is not tested as a whole. On the basis of current research findings, future researches may carry a more mature hypothetical foundation in evaluating markets and so employ a model testing method such as structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine customer attitude model as a whole. Also future study may also be conducted upon amount of toxic ingredients present in spurious cosmetic products.

6. CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

Legitimate product makers should develop a website or application in such a way in which the list of all the genuine goods should be listed with appropriate code number which is difficult to copy/ crack for counterfeit manufacturers. Product should be advertised in such a way which can differentiate the genuine from fake goods. Further to curb the phenomenon of spurious production, companies should develop complex typical features which can be very hard to copycat.

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