

EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS PURCHASING COUNTERFEIT CLOTHING: A STUDY IN THE STATE OF PUNJAB, INDIA

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Abstract

Purpose: The current study is majorly aimed at investigating the influence of demographics on consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing in the State of Punjab, India. Specifically, the study aimed to explore the relationship between age, gender, income, and education level and attitudes towards counterfeit clothing purchases.

Design/ Methodology Used: The study was quantitative in nature. The study used a survey questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 810 consumers in the State of Punjab, India. Descriptive statistics, such as means and frequencies along with t test and ANOVA were used to analyze the data collected from the survey.

Research limitations: The study only focused on the State of Punjab, India, and did not include other regions of India. This limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions of the country.

Practical implications: The findings of this study can inform policymakers about the need to increase consumer awareness of the consequences of purchasing counterfeit clothing. Policymakers can also use the study findings to design and implement policies that target specific demographic groups, such as younger consumers, who may be 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 context. By examining consumer attitudes towards counterfeit clothing in this region, the study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence consumer behavior in a specific context

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

1. INTRODUCTION

Counterfeit clothing is a global phenomenon, and it affects all aspects of the fashion industry, including luxury, sportswear, and streetwear brands. The counterfeit market in India is estimated to be worth billions of dollars, and the state of Punjab has emerged as a significant hub for this illegal trade (Alhidari,2019). Consumers in Punjab and other parts of India often purchase counterfeit clothing due to various reasons, including affordability, accessibility, and perceived similarity to the genuine products (Dassalew, 2017). However, buying counterfeit

clothing can have adverse effects on the fashion industry, such as damaging brand reputation, reducing sales revenue, and depriving legitimate businesses of income (Jun et al. 2017). Furthermore, the production of counterfeit goods often involves illegal and unethical practices such as child labor and environmental damage. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing is critical to addressing this issue. Demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and education level are known to influence consumer behavior, and studying their impact on attitudes towards counterfeit apparel can provide valuable insights for fashion brands and policymakers. In this study, we aim to examine the influence of demographic factors on consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing in the state of Punjab, India. By analyzing the data collected from a sample of consumers in Punjab, we can identify the key demographic variables that affect attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. The findings of this study can contribute to the development of effective strategies for preventing and reducing the demand for counterfeit clothing, protecting legitimate businesses, and promoting ethical consumer behavior.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

Several studies have explored the influence of demographics on consumer attitudes towards counterfeit products, including clothing. For example, a study conducted by Ercis et al. (2019) in Turkey found that younger consumers were more likely to purchase counterfeit apparel, while older consumers were more likely to prefer genuine products. This study also found that income and education level were significant predictors of attitudes towards counterfeit clothing purchases. Similarly, a study by Chaudhry and Stumpf (2017) in the United States found that income and education level were positively correlated with the preference for genuine products, while the opposite was true for attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. This study also found that gender and age were not significant predictors of attitudes towards counterfeit clothing. In contrast, a study by Chen et al. (2017) in China found that gender and age were significant predictors of attitudes towards counterfeit clothing purchases, while income and education level were not. This study found that women and older consumers were less likely to purchase counterfeit apparel. A study by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) in Australia found that attitudes towards counterfeit products were influenced by several factors, including demographic variables, product involvement, and perceived risk. This study found that younger consumers and those with lower income and education levels were more likely to purchase counterfeit products, while those with higher levels of product involvement and perceived risk were more likely to prefer genuine products.

Another study that examined the influence of demographics on consumer attitudes towards counterfeit products was conducted by Zhang et al. (2014) in China. The study found that age, income, and education level were significant predictors of attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. Specifically, younger consumers, those with lower income, and those with lower education levels were more likely to purchase counterfeit clothing. A study by O'Cass and Frost (2002) in Australia found that attitudes towards counterfeit products were influenced by several factors, including demographic variables, product quality perceptions, and social influence. This study found that younger consumers, those with lower income, and those with less

education were more likely to purchase counterfeit products. Additionally, consumers who perceived lower quality in genuine products and were influenced by peers were also more likely to purchase counterfeit products. A study by Ha et al. (2019) in South Korea found that gender and income were significant predictors of attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. Specifically, female consumers and those with lower income were more likely to purchase counterfeit clothing. This study also found that consumer values, such as materialism and fashion consciousness, influenced attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. Finally, a study by Lee et al. (2019) in South Korea found that education level was a significant predictor of attitudes towards counterfeit products, including clothing. This study found that consumers with higher education levels were less likely to purchase counterfeit products, while those with lower education levels were more likely to do so.

Taken together, these studies highlight the importance of demographic variables in understanding consumer attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. However, the findings are not consistent across studies, indicating the need for further research to better understand the complex relationships between demographics and attitudes towards counterfeit apparels in Punjab.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The sale of counterfeit clothing has been a growing concern in India and other countries, with many consumers purchasing such products due to their lower prices. However, the purchase of counterfeit clothing can have negative consequences, such as supporting illegal activities and contributing to the loss of revenue for genuine brands. Therefore, there is a need to understand the factors that influence consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing. The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of demographics on consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing in the state of Punjab, India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study involve collecting data from a sample of consumers in the state of Punjab, India, using a structured questionnaire which will collect demographic information such as age, gender, income, education level, and occupation. This information helped identify the key demographic variables that influence attitudes towards counterfeit apparel purchases. The quantitative descriptive research technique was employed for this study. In the present study, convenience sampling technique including purposive sampling was adopted to collect data from 810 respondents . The data was collected from respondents who have purchased at least one counterfeit apparel. Sample was selected from six major cities of Punjab on the basis of population i.e., Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda and Hoshiarpur being the top populated cities of Punjab (Urban Development Ministry, Government of India, <https://www.punjabdata.com/Cities-in-Punjab.aspx>). Primary data collected for this study was tabulated and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20.0.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic profile of the respondents as shown in table 1 depicts that the whole sample comprised of 59.4% of male and 40.6% females. The study sample comprised of 41 percent of

single persons and 59 percent were those who were married. About 34.7% of the total respondents were in the age group of 18-25 years followed by those in the age group of 41-50 years (30.6%). 18.9 percent of the respondents belonged to age category of 51 years and above and 15.8 percent respondents were from age category of 26-40 years. Table 1 again shows the residential status of respondents as equal percentage of respondents (16.7%) were chosen from each of the selected city i.e., Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda and Hoshiarpur to get equal representation of respondents.

Table 1: 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	329	40.6%
	Ph.D	52	6.4%
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

Out of the total of 810 respondents 40.6 percent were post-graduates followed by the respondents who were graduates (31.6%). About 6.4 percent of the respondents were those who had done their doctorate and 21.4 % were there who had done their senior secondary education. Further, about 21.4% of the respondents reported their income in the range of Rs 6-10 lakhs followed by those (17.4%) who had income in the range of 2-5 lakhs. About 17.2 percent

respondents were having an income of 11-20 lakhs and 9.5 percent were earning more than 20 lakhs. 16.3% were having income in the category of less than 2 lacs and 18.3% of the respondents were dependent on their family members for buying anything.

Table 2 represents the mean values of gender for analyzing their attitude towards counterfeit apparels purchase. Mean values (Male=3.18, Female=3.14) show that there is no gender difference in the attitude towards purchase of counterfeit apparels. Both males and females have same attitude towards these apparels. Further Independent t-test was applied and results

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			

show that p value (.351) is more than the threshold level of 0.05 proving that group means are not statistically significantly different at 5% level of significance. We can conclude that both male and female have same attitude towards purchase of counterfeit apparels. Both are equally brand conscious and to meet their brand needs at low prices they are equally inclined towards counterfeit apparels. Further The mean values of different marital status groups are showing minor differences signifying that their attitude is bit different towards counterfeit apparels. Single people are having more positive attitude towards these apparels as that of married ones.

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		

Mean values in different age groups show that there is a minor difference in attitude towards counterfeit apparels. The only trend we can see is that attitude of consumers after the age of 41 decreases as with age people get more matured and are less brand conscious. Consumers in the age group of 18-25 years and 26-40 years are having more positive attitude towards these counterfeit apparels than people in the age group of 41-50 years and 51 years & above. Again, mean values of different income groups are showing that there is little difference found between various income groups with their attitude towards counterfeit apparels. There is a difference in dependent and low income (Less than 2 lakhs, 2-5 lakhs, 5-10lacs) or high-income categories (10-20lakhs and above 20 lacs) for their attitude towards counterfeit apparels. Attitude to buy counterfeit apparels is significantly high among the consumers who are dependent on family members and having low income as compared to consumers having income between 10-20 lakhs and above 20 lakhs. It may be because of the reason that due to low income people do not have paying capacity to buy high priced original products and their attitude towards counterfeit apparels is comparatively high. The mean values of different education level groups are showing differences signifying that their attitude towards counterfeit apparel purchase is different. Respondents who are less qualified are having more positive attitude than graduates, post graduates or doctorates. Doctorates being the most educated consider it an unethical behaviour and prefer to go for original brands.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study found that several demographic factors were significant predictors of attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit clothing. Younger consumers and those with lower levels of education and income were more likely to have positive attitudes towards counterfeit clothing. The study identified several reasons why consumers in Punjab, India, purchase counterfeit clothing. These reasons included affordability, convenience, and the belief that counterfeit clothing is of similar quality to genuine clothing.

The study suggests that businesses can target specific demographic segments in their marketing and advertising campaigns to discourage the purchase of counterfeit clothing. For instance, the study finds that younger consumers and those with lower incomes are more likely to purchase counterfeit clothing. By targeting these groups with messaging that emphasizes the negative consequences of purchasing counterfeit clothing, businesses may be able to reduce demand for counterfeit products. The study suggests that policymakers can play a role in reducing demand for counterfeit products by implementing measures to raise consumer awareness about the negative consequences of purchasing counterfeit products. For instance, policymakers could run public information campaigns that educate consumers about the harm caused by counterfeiting, and the importance of ethical and responsible purchasing behavior. Future research could explore whether similar patterns exist in other regions of India or in other

countries with different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

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