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The effect of Attitude Factors on Consumer Purchase Intention of Counterfeit Products

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is overwhelming with a wide range of counterfeit products. Disregard of anti-counterfeiting policies to control and abolish this illegal products, the number of its have continuously increasing and swarming the market. All the enforcement by the government seems futile and fails to stop people from purchasing these counterfeit products. This study attempted to examine the attitude factors that affecting consumers purchase intention toward counterfeit products in Malaysia. This five attitude factors regarding price, brand awareness, risk, integrity, and personal gratification are further analyzed on its effect towards consumers purchase intention. The findings of this study revealed that attitude factors have significant influence on purchase intention towards counterfeit products. Hence the findings significantly important to the manufacturers and marketers to give more attention and understand the attitude factors of consumers behavior and therefore, able to create effective marketing strategies and anti-piracy campaign in the future.

Field of Research: *Attitude Factors, Consumer Purchase Intention, Counterfeit Product.*

1. Introduction

Underwriters Laboratories, a safety consulting and Certification Company headquartered in U.S reported that counterfeiting is considered a thriving multi-billion dollar global industry with lower risks of legal consequences (UL, 2014). Even though counterfeiting is a lucrative and rewarding business (Chuchinprakarn, 2003), it is considered a problem, unethical and unlawful practices in most countries (De Matos et al., 2007; Yoo and Lee 2005). In most cases, counterfeit products have similar characteristics as the original products, particularly in the design, color, label or brand name (Ha and Lennon,

2006). These counterfeit products which sold in the market are considered as pirated and sell illegally without permission of the original manufacturer (McDonald and Roberts, 1994). By definition, counterfeiting is any unauthorized manufacturing items characteristic which are protected as intellectual property rights such as trademarks, patents and copyrights (Cordell et al., 1996; Chaudhry et al., 2005).

Counterfeit products are commonly available especially in the luxury industry (Jen, 2005). According to Yoo and Lee (2009), the luxury and popular brand is a brand typically counterfeited. Due to the fact that the brand is known for high-end fashion, counterfeiters take the advantage of the merits to produce products that similar to the brand (Norashikin, 2009). Furthermore, the country like China, Thailand, India and Malaysia are well-known as the home of piracy due to rise in living standard (Haque, Khatibi and Rahman, 2009). In recent years, the Malaysian government seriously involved through many campaigns to eradicate this issue. Disregard of many awareness campaigns by Malaysian government, counterfeit merchandise is purchased knowingly and intentionally by the consumer. This trend known as non-deceptive counterfeiting because the consumer recognizes that the goods are not authentic due to its cheaper price, purchase location, and quality of the materials used (Chakraborty et al., 1997; Gentry et al., 2001; Wilcox et al., 2009). The government legislation of anti-piracy act and continuous enforcement seems insufficient and fails to solve the problem (Stumpf et al., 2011).

Even though, the reasons why consumer buys counterfeit products are widely investigated by researchers across cultures, the understanding of factors that encourage them to buy counterfeit products is very limited. A study by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argues that the intention is often seen as the conative component of attitude. Therefore, this study will focus on how the attitude factors of the consumers influence their purchase intention to buy counterfeit products. In other words, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between attitude factors and purchase intention of consumers on counterfeit products.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), purchase intention is good determinants of purchase behavior, in which the purchase intention itself is determined by attitudes (Phau and Teah, 2009). TPB is useful in examining the factors that influence the purchasing counterfeit products by consumers. TPB was defined as a person's beliefs on how easy or difficult are the performance of behavior is likely to be (Ajzen and Madden, 1986). In other words, the consumers' belief about something will create or trigger a strong behavior. There are another theory that used to adapt with purchase decision which is Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was proposed by (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, attitude is definitely related with behavioral intentions, which in turn is an antecedent to the real behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

The Theory of Moral Reasoning proposed by Kohlberg (1976), states that an individual encounter ethical dilemmas through reasoning whether the expected personal consequence is a reward or punishment. This followed by a clear effort to define the principles and moral values, while still maintain and adhere to the values of a reference group and society (Nill and Shultz, 1996). Likewise, crux is about finding a balance between what is morally acceptable to fit the individual and the social environment. Consumer behavioral choices are generally influenced by the behavior considered appropriate and therefore normatively approved, while others are seen as inappropriate and hence restricted (Gupta et al., 2004).

The Theory of Moral Competency was stated that attitudinal construct will influence consumers behavioral intentions regarding counterfeits can be distinguished by their attitude towards the lawfulness of counterfeits and the legality of purchasing counterfeits (Cordell et al, 1996; Ramayah et al, 2002). The higher level of an individual with moral judgments, the less likely that individual is to approve or engage in counterfeits transactions. When individual ethical values are challenged, the beliefs and attitudes of individuals become a valid predictor of intention to the situation. According to Kohlberg's (1976), Theory of Moral Competence suggests that a consumer's personal behavior is based on the subjective sense of justice.

2.2 Attitude Factors

According to Huang et al, (2004), attitude is learned predisposition to respond to a situation in a favorable or unfavorable way. In marketing, attitude is one of the most important concepts that marketers use to understand consumers. Attitude in marketing is mostly referred as a general evaluation of the product or service made over time. Since attitude cannot be observed directly, researchers have to determine or rely on consumers attitude through measurements (Huang at al, 2004).

Consumer attitude summarizes the criteria; namely consumer tastes, endorsement or preference for product attributes that consumers use to make decisions about what products to buy. According Xiao and He (2011), consumers' attitude explains how people beliefs and knowledge lead to attitudes. It is the information integration process of consumers which form attitudes toward actions, thus influence people intention to perform behavior. These attitude concept is frequently use as a predictor of consumer intention and behavior. Past studies have also suggests that there are many influences factors that affect consumer attitude on counterfeiting products such as price, brand awareness, risk, integrity and personal gratification (Huang et al, 2004; de Matos et al., 2007; Carpenter and Lear, 2011; Cheng et al., 2011; Budiman, 2012).

Price is referred to counterfeit products which usually sold at lower prices. According to Huang et al. (2004), the greater the relationship between price and quality to the consumers, the lower his or her perception on the quality of counterfeits products. Subsequently, Augusto de Matos et al. (2007) highlights price quality inference as the belief that the high price are equivalent to high quality and low price are equivalents to low quality.

Meanwhile, brand awareness is referred to those who pay considerable attention and interest in buying well-known brand names (Yasin, 2009). This group of consumers consumed counterfeit products of luxury brands because they view it as a signal of status and wealth. Thus, the more prestigious of the brand name, the consumers will be more likely to purchase it to reflect their status, disregard of its value of counterfeit products.

Risk can be referred as consumer perceptions of uncertainty and adverse consequences of buying a product or service (Dowling and Staelin, 1994). Perceived risk is a multi-dimensional construct which implies that consumers experience pre-purchase uncertainty regarding the type and degree of expected loss resulting from the purchase and use of a product. According to Havlena and DeSarbo (1991), the risk may include different components such as performance, financial, safety, social, psychological, and time or opportunity dimensions. Integrity can be referred as individuals personal ethical standard and this group of people normally follows the law (Phau and Tech, 2009; Wang et al, 2005). Moreover, consumers who respect the law will affect their decision in choosing original or counterfeit products. According to Steenhout and Van Kenhove (2006), the influence of values like integrity will affect one's judgment towards succumbing to unethical activities. The study indicated that those consumers who adhere to the law usually have a higher attitude against counterfeits.

Meanwhile, personal gratification is referred to an individual need for the sense of accomplishment, social recognition and the desire to enjoy the finer thing in life (Ang et al., 2001). It is about the act of consumers in satisfying their desires and pleasure by actively seeking counterfeit products that meet their needs. These characteristics are often associated with individuals who seek fulfillment, social recognition and a higher standard of living. Norashikin (2009) and De Matos et al. (2007) found that personal gratification influenced purchase intention on counterfeit products.

2.3 *Purchase Intention*

The theory of plan behavior (TPB) states that purchase intention is a good determinant of purchase behavior. In turn, the purchase intention is determined by the attitude (Phau and Teah, 2009). Purchase behavior can only be performed if the opportunities and resources such as accessibility of counterfeit products are present. Without such conditions, regardless of how favorable the intention is, it will make the purchase intention difficult to perform a purchase (Chang, 1998). According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, attitude is definitely related with behavioral intentions, which in turn is an antecedent to the real behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). In the context of this study, the strength intentions of consumers to have in aspects of low and high in attitude factors may lead to unethical or ethical behaviors. This furthers reinforces the used of attitude factors that influences consumers to purchase intention towards counterfeits products as an indicator of actual purchase behavior.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Figure 1 shows a conceptual framework of study on the relationship between attitude factors (price, brand awareness, risk, integrity and personal gratification) and purchase intention of consumers on counterfeit products.

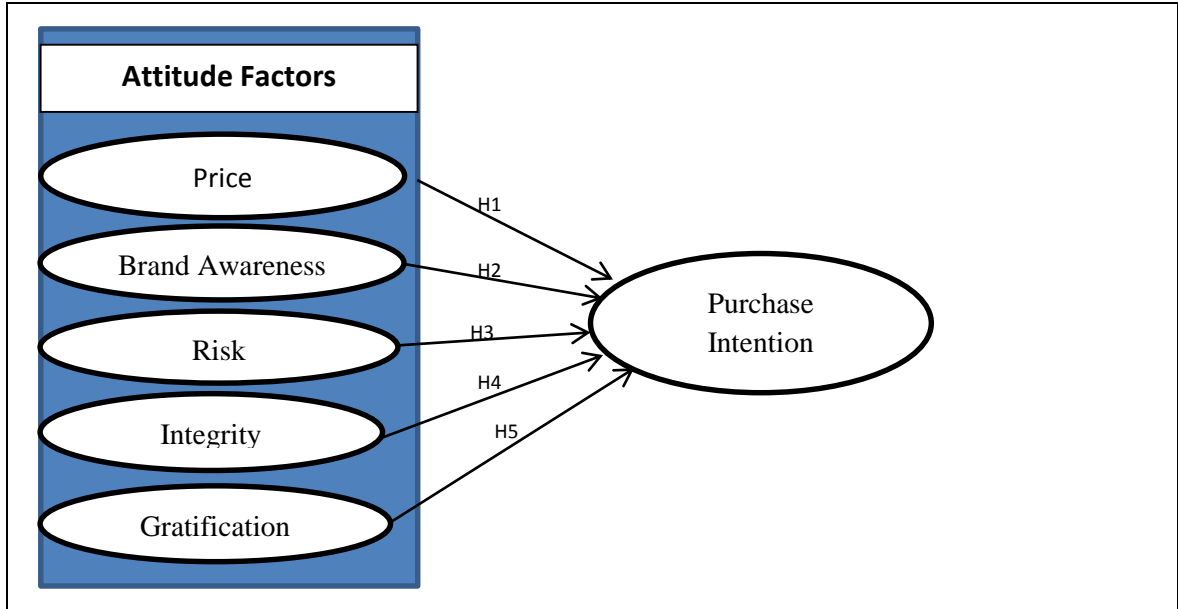


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

According to Huang et al (2004), price is referring to the counterfeit products that are usually sold at lower prices. Since higher prices is directly related to greater quality products, the consumer form low expectation and perception on the quality of the counterfeits due to its low prices. Consumers will choose counterfeit products when there is a price advantages. Furthermore, studies have shown that when a counterfeits has a distant price advantages over the genuine products, consumers will select the counterfeits (Bloch et al., 1993). Thus H1 states that,

H1: There is a positive influence of price on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Brand-conscious consumers are more selective in buying well-known brand products (Yasin, 2009). Possessing the product of luxury brand is seen as important in creating self-identity and a sense of achievement to the consumers (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004, 25). Phau and Teah (2009) argue that the level of status consumption is the most significant to those who is most likely to purchase counterfeit luxury brands. These status-conscious consumers are more willing to buy counterfeits to meet their status needs. Therefore H2 leads to hypothesis:

H2: There is a positive influence of brand awareness on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Perceived risk implies that consumers experience pre-purchase uncertainty regarding the type and degree of expected loss resulting from the purchase and use of a product. De Matos et al. (2007) suggest that perceived risk is the most important variable to predict consumer attitude toward counterfeits. Consumers will experience judgment on what are the chances that a problem may occur and also on what would be the negative effects of the problem. This judgment experiences will influence every stage of the consumer decision-making process. Thus H3 leads to hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive influence of perceived risk on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Consumer definition of integrity is very important. If they value highly on integrity, the chances of them viewing counterfeit products as an alternative would be less. However, if the consumers feel that integrity is not important, they would not experience guilty feelings in possessing counterfeit products (Ang et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2005). Since integrity has a positive influence to social consequences of consumer attitudes towards counterfeit products (Phau and Teah, 2009), thus H4 states that,

H4: There is a positive influence of integrity on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

Personal gratification is the need for a sense of accomplishment, social recognition, and the desire to enjoy the finer and luxury things in life (Ang et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2005). Some studies found that personal gratification proven to have significant negative relationship towards attitudes of counterfeits (Phau and Teah, 2009; Nordin, 2009). Personal gratification might influence the purchase decision of consumers to buy counterfeit product since buying a counterfeit product does not portray the consumers. accomplishment. Thus H5 states that,

H5: There is a positive influence of personal gratification on purchase intention of counterfeit products.

4. Methodology

The target population in this study is Malaysian consumers within age group between 18 to 60 and above. The respondents within that group are believed to have a considerable amount of spending power, substantial exposure and knowledge of counterfeit products. This study was conducted in Klang Valley area, due to its higher density population and the center of various shopping malls in Malaysia. Convenience sampling method was used because the respondents are easily accessible and more co-operative (self - administered). About 150 respondents gave their full cooperation and willingness to participate in the study. According to Uma Sakaran (2003), the sample size larger than

30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. The survey is carried out in two month between January and February 2014.

The survey instrument was adapted from the previous research (Huang et al, 2004; de Matos et al., 2007; Carpenter and Lear, 2011). Based on the Likert scales varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), the respondent was asked to choose the answers provided. The questions was not specified any product in particular, but reflected the general expression of “counterfeited products” because the purpose of this study is to measure consumer attitudes.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Reliability Analysis

The data collected from the survey were subsequently tested for validity analysis to ensure the ability of the items to measure the same construct (Sekaran, 2003). The findings in Table 1 show that alpha coefficients of attitude factors were between 0.7 to 0.9. According to Hair et al. (2010), a score above 0.7 is the preferable score and acceptably reliable without further discussion.

Table 1. Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	
	Pilot Study (N=20)	Actual Study (N=150)
Attitude Factors		
Price	0.797	0.829
Brand Awareness	0.799	0.829
Risk	0.784	0.834
Integrity	0.986	0.966
Personal Gratification	0.795	0.82
Purchase Intention	0.797	0.816

5.2 Correlation Coefficient Test

Table 2 shows the result of the correlations among the variables in term of its direction and the strength. The result indicates that only four out of five attitude factors have a relationship with purchase intention. As such, the correlations in this study are within the acceptable level. The result has also shows that the most important attitude factor is personal gratification with $r = 0.940$, thus it has the highest strength among five attitude factors.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis of Attitude Factors

		Price	Brand Awareness	Risk	Integrity	Personal Gratification	Purchase Intention
Price	Pearson Correlation	1	.801**	.777**	.073	.823**	.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.375	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.801**	1	.851**	.023	.863**	.893**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.784	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150
Risk	Pearson Correlation	.777**	.851**	1	-.005	.835**	.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.948	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150
Integrity	Pearson Correlation	.073	.023	-.005	1	.083	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375	.784	.948		.313	.508
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150
Personal Gratification	Pearson Correlation	.823**	.863**	.835**	.083	1	.940**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.313		.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	.874**	.893**	.872**	.054	.940**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.508	.000	
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150

*** Significant at $p < .005$

5.3 Regression Analysis

Table 2 shows the findings of regression analysis with R Square = 0.932. This implies that 93.2% of the variation dependent variable (purchase intention) can be explained by the five independent variables (price, brand awareness, risk, integrity and personal gratification). This indicates that attitude factors are statistically significant in explaining on consumer purchase intention on counterfeit products.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.965 ^a	.932	.930	.24327

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Gratification, Integrity, Price, Risk, Brand Awareness

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Meanwhile, the results in Table 4 show that four of the attitude factors; namely price ($t = 5.499$; $p < .005$, $p = .000$), brand awareness ($t=3.308$; $p<0.05$, $p=.001$), risk ($t=3.236$; $p<0.05$, $p=.002$), and personal gratification ($t=9.742$; $p<0.05$, $p=.000$) have a positive relationship with purchase intention of counterfeit products. The findings have also show favorable Beta value (B) on personal gratification ($B = 0.489$), price ($B=0.225$), brand awareness ($B= 0.165$), and risk ($B=0.148$). However, integrity is the only attitude factor that found to be insignificant to purchase intention ($t=-.249$; $p>0.05$, $p=.804$) and Beta value ($B=-.005$). Therefore, these tests clearly explain that attitude factors (the predictor) are positively related to consumer purchase intention of counterfeit products (dependent variable). Therefore hypotheses H1 on price, H2 on brand awareness, H3 on risks and H5 on personal gratification are supported, and only H4 is rejected.

Table 4. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.179	.165		-1.089	.278
Price	.213	.039	.225	5.499	.000
Brand Awareness	.172	.052	.165	3.308	.001
Risk	.154	.048	.148	3.236	.002
Integrity	-.005	.018	-.005	-.249	.804
Personal Gratification	.485	.050	.489	9.742	.000

6. Conclusion and Future Research

The findings indicate that there are four attitude factors (price, brand awareness, risk, and personal gratification) that directly affect purchase intention of Malaysian consumers on counterfeit products. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on the related attitude factors which affect the purchase intention. Hence, the practitioners such as the marketers and manufacturers will be able to develop better marketing strategies by focusing on this four attitude factors as to ensure and attract consumers to buy the genuine products. They have to give more attention on how to effectively find a good mechanism to bring change on consumer's attitude and awareness.

Since this study does not address specific counterfeit products, consideration on different products categories may be more informative. Future studies should look at

other antecedents of attitude factors and replicate it to other countries since different culture might suggest different attitude factors. Since there is vast availability of counterfeit products in Asia countries, thus this study might create awareness and understanding on the influence attitude factors of counterfeits consumers. Hence, a more effective campaign to curb the purchasing behavior of counterfeits would be more efficient.

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