Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention towards Counterfeit products in Nawalparasi, Nepal

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Abstract

Counterfeit products are supplied by market follower organizations throughout the world, violating the rules of trade and ignoring consumerism. Nepalese people are also price sensitive and are using such products knowingly or unknowingly. Realizing this fact, the study aimed to identify whether there is any significant difference or not on purchase intention of non- deceptive counterfeit products among divergent professional groups, and influence of predictors on purchase intention of counterfeit products. Data were collected by purposively locating respondents at banks and colleges. Altogether 250 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 200 complete responses were further processed and analyzed employing descriptive and inferential tools. Only four constructs/variables, such as price consciousness, personal gratification, social influence, and perceived risk, were taken into consideration to measure purchase intention. The ANOVA results suggest that there was no statistically significant difference in the purchase intention of counterfeit products among teachers, students, and bankers. Findings showed that personal gratification, social influence and price consciousness have a positive and significant relationship with purchase intention toward counterfeit products. However, perceived risk factors do not have a significant influence on purchase intention towards counterfeit products. This study may provide valuable insights to policymakers, academia, and the corporate sector in formulating and implementing effective rules and regulations to eradicate unethical trade and expand consumer awareness, lay the foundation for doing further research, and enhance brand value and equity.

Keywords: counterfeit products,purchase intention, personal gratification, perceived risk, social influence

Introduction

Counterfeit products are low-priced products produced and supplied under another renowned brand name without obtaining permission from the brand owners (Meraviglia, 2018). Such products are offered by many organizations, violating the ownership and rights of trademark, copyright, and patent rights (Che Mohd Nawi et al., 2022). Different factors, such as high per-unit profitability, low level of consumer awareness, low level of investment requirement, low risk of discovery, weak or no penalty provisions of the state, etc., encourage many organizations to introduce such products in the market. Counterfeiters use digital printing, augmented reality and custom software to create fake labels so that consumers could not recognized such products easily. Samaddar and Menon (2020) opined that globalization, advancement of integrated supply chain, and growth of e-commerce enable to expand such trade through out the world. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2025) states that the global trade in counterfeit goods was $467 billion in 2021 and is estimated to reach $1.79 trillion by 2030. Companies undertaking counterfeit trade are flourising their businees golbally generating abnormal profit. China is the main hub of counterfeith products followed by Turkey, Hongkong, and Colombia (OECD, 2025). Many global organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, World Health Organization, Interpol, Global Anti-Counterfeiting Group, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, etc., are playing a crucial role in governing against counterfeiting (Chaudhry, 2009). Such organizations have developed and enacted many policies and programs against counterfeiting. Raising consumer demand for such products is the main driving force for expanding counterfeiting globally (Hoon Ang et al., 2001). Thus, counterfeit products are diffusing illegaly throughout the world hampering legitimate trade and discouraging innovation and creativity. Due to wider availability of such products, many well established companies are loosing their market share, goodwill, brand value, and consumer trusts or loyalties (Tunçel, 2021). Schneider and Bikoff (2015) opined that counterfeiting has become a crime of the twenty-first century, violating the global economy and posing health as well as safety risks to consumers who purchase and use counterfeit products. Counterfeit products such as pharmaceuticals and food items may contain incorrect or harmful ingredients that pose serious threats to public health. The ease of producing and distributing fake goods challenges the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks and law enforcement. Similarly, criminal networks use the production and distribution of counterfeit goods to finance other illegal activities such as money laundering, human trafficking, and

even terrorism. Such products seem exactly like original brands since they have same brand name, packaging, trademark, design and color as original one but have inferior quality and performance (Nghia, 2019). Singh et al. (2021) opined that both the seller and the buyer knowingly sell and buy fraud products at the cheapest price in non- deceptive counterfeiting. Price sensitive conumsers but intended to demonstrate status via logo of branded products often purchase such products at cheaper price. Deceptive counterfeiting occurs when consumers buy fake products at premium price believing products are original or geneunie (Bhatia, 2018). Such products are sold through authorized channels charging price similar to genuine products. Thus, there are two types of counterfeiting i.e. deceptive and non deceptive counterfeiting and consumers invlove in such trade knowingly or unknowingly.

Consumer buying behavior is influenced by many factors such as prior experience, brand name, product characteristics, perceived quality, store image and more factors (Fall Diallo et al., 2013; Stavkova et al., 2008). Parajuli (2023) opined that the purchase behavior of consumer is largly influenced by technological advancement. Counterfeit product producers also use latest and innovative technology to produce and supply product. Ramayah et al. (2002) opined that the majority of consumers are not likely to pay high price for clothes, sports wear and accessories as these products do not have longer expected life. In the same vein, Wee et al. (1995) argue that fashion-oriented consumers like to buy low–priced counterfeit products. Young consumers having financial crisis knowingly buy counterfeit of luxury brands aiming to show off and enlarge their own status image (Avcı, 2024; Delener, 2000).

In Nepal, many global brands associated with healthcare, sports wear, fashion, cosmetics, electronics etc. are facing threats from counterfeit products (Das, 2024; Mahaseth, 2019; Parajuli, 2020; The DMN News 2024; WOW Magazine, 2024). Such products are available everywhere from streets to shopping malls (Pandey, 2021). Despite the provision and activation of different acts such as the Patent Design and Trademark Act, Copyright Act, Customs Act, and Consumer Protection Act against counterfeiting and to protect intellectual property rights, the volume of counterfeit trade is rising day by day (Maharjan, 2024).

In the Nepali context, empirical studies on counterfeiting products and purchase intention remain fragmented and limited. Chaudhary (2023) undertaken a research on awareness and attitude of professionals and pharmacists towards counterfeit medicines. Similarly, Adhikari and Biswakarma (2017) investigated the purchase intention of nepalese

youth towards counterfeit apparel and accessories. Accordingly, Malla and Yukongdi (2020) examined the influence of personality and social factors of white color workers on the purchase intention of counterfeit products in Kathmandu Valley. However, to date, no one research has been done making comparisions across different demographic groups in Nepal. Thus, the study aims to compare purchase intention across university teachers, university studentse and bankers. Accordingly, researchers were intended to assess the influence of four predictors named price conciousness, personal gratification, perceived risk and social influence on purchase intention of distinct demographic groups i.e. university teachers, students, and bankers towards non-deceptive counterfeit products such as cosmetics, clothes, watch and footwears. This study may play the catalytic role to identify the behavioral intention of Nepali educated people towards counterfeit products. In the same vein, findings of this study could be a valuable reference for business organizations to formulate and implement strategies against counterfeiting.

According to Nordin (2009) counterfeit products are illegal and inferior-quality products. Lai and Zaichkowsky (1999) opined that counterfeit products seem like genuine brands; however, they are inferior in performance and durability. Counterfeit products have the same packaging, design, color, brand name, trademark, and patent rights as original brands but are illegal and low-quality products (Bian et al., 2016; Martinez & Jaeger, 2016; Meraviglia, 2018; Wilcock & Boys, 2014). Producers produce counterfeit products using low-quality raw materials. Such products are available everywhere, covering almost all product lines such as clothes, sunglasses, watches, cosmetic items, footwear, pharmaceuticals, machinery, electronics, food items, and so on (Budiman & Wijaya, 2014; Malla & Yukongdi, 2020; Mohamed, 2012). The Nepalese economy is an import-based economy. Despite the knowledge about the inferior quality and harmfulness of counterfeit products, many Nepalese people are buying such products. Intentions are motivational factors that influence the behavior of an individual (Ajzen, 1991). An individual consumer's buying behavior is predicted considering his or her purchase intention. According to Rizwan et al. (2014) purchase intention is the likelihood of purchasing a particular product or service. It is a plan to buy any product or service and is associated with a willingness and readiness of a consumer to buy and use any product or service. Consumers' purchase intentions vary based on their nationality, product category, and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and income (Chapa et al., 2006; Chaudhry & Stumpf, 2011; Solomon & O'Brien, 1990). In the context of counterfeit products, purchase intention is the willingness or readiness of an

individual to purchase and use counterfeit products (Budiman & Wijaya, 2014; Tunçel, 2022).

Price Consciousness

Price is the monetary value of a product. The price level of a product largely influences a consumer's buying decision (Rihn et al., 2018). Price consciousness is the degree to which consumers give more priority to price level rather than other attributes of products (Alford & Biswas, 2002; Rihn et al., 2018). Price-sensitive consumers make comparisons between different brands based on pricing factors (Mägi & Julander, 2005) and buy low priced products (Yao & Oppewal, 2016). Price-conscious consumers mostly like to buy discounted and cheaper-priced products (Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Rahpeima et al., 2014).). Such consumers like to enjoy economic benefits, so they do not have any complaints about the quality level of counterfeit products. Low-priced counterfeit products attract consumers such as bankers, university students, and university teachers who give more priority to cost minimization rather than the quality level of products. Several studies such as (Budiman & Wijaya, 2014; Dwobeng et al., 2020; Malla & Yukongdi, 2020; Ndofirepi et al., 2022; Verma et al., 2018) have validated a positive and significant relationship between price consciousness and purchase intention towards counterfeit products. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between price consciousness and purchase intention towards counterfeit products.

Personal Gratification

According to Hoon Ang et al. (2001) personal gratification is the sense of accomplishment, happiness, and satisfaction. It is associated with intrinsic reward experienced by consumers while purchasing counterfeit products. It inspires consumers to fulfill their own desires owing branded-looking goods at a cheaper price and enhance self-image by being economical (Canguende-Valentim et al., 2025; Zamil et al., 2023). It means consumers feel proud and become happy if they are able to enhance the prestige of well-known brands at cheaper prices. Many scholars such as (Farooq & Moon, 2025; Phau et al., 2009; Tunçel, 2022; Wilcox et al., 2009) found a positive relationship between personal gratification and purchase intention towards counterfeit products in different settings. In this context, the following hypothesis was developed.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between personal gratification and purchase intention towards counterfeit products.

Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is a subjective phenomenon. In consumer behavior study, it was initiated by Bauer in 1960 (Sharkasi & Agag, 2024). Dowling and Staelin (1994) opine perceived risk as the consumer's belief about the uncertainty and undesirable consequences or losses due to the purchase of a product or service. Thus, it is associated with consumers' doubt or confusion about the purchase decision of the product or service. Every stage of the buying decision-making process of consumers is largely influenced by their perception and assessment of risk factors. Perceived risk is a multifaceted construct having different dimensions such as social risk, performance risk, psychological risk, physical risk, and prosecution risk (Alzaidi & Agag, 2022; Cunningham et al., 2005; Koay, 2018; Riquelme et al., 2012; Tseng et al., 2021).

In this context, physical risk, performance risk, social risk, and psychological risk factors were taken into consideration because these dimensions have a direct impact across cosmetics, watches, and clothing product items. While buying such counterfeit products, consumers often have worry and anxiety about toxic ingredients, durability, functionality, adverse reactions, the possibility of chronic health issues, and loss of self-status and self-image. Goyal (2008) opines that perceived risk factors have great influence on consumers' purchase decision. Many scholars such as (Kurniawati, 2019; Permatasari & Muthohar, 2023; Tseng et al., 2021; Tudu & Prakash, 2020; Wu & Zhao, 2021) found an significant and negative relationship between perceived risk factors and purchase intention towards counterfeit products such as fashion items, clothing items, watches, and leisure goods.

H3: Perceived risk has a significant negative influence on the purchase intention towards counterfeit products.

Social Influence

Social influence refers to the change in behavioral patterns of people due to direct interaction and belongingness with others. Consumers' buying behavior is largely influenced by the opinions, preferences, suggestions, and recommendations of other people with whom they interact or associate (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). Consumers belong to different groups, such as friendship groups, social groups, shopping groups, work groups, and so on. These

groups are the sources of information about products and services and provide valuable guidelines or norms of behavior. Khan et al. (2022) argue that consumers having limited affordability but being status-conscious are motivated to buy counterfeits of genuine products recommended by their peers and dears. Thus, university students who often have financial crises and pressure to bear group norms and lifestyles may pursue purchasing counterfeit products. Accordingly, university teachers and bankers may wish to demonstrate their own professional identity or status using cheaper-priced counterfeit products. argue that consumers having limited affordability but are status concious motivated to buy counterfeits of genuine products recommended by their peers and dears. Several studies (Hidayat & Diwasasri, 2013; Noor & Muhammad, 2019; Peace et al., 2003) validated a positive association between social influence and purchase intention towards counterfeit products. Based on this notion, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H4: Social influence has a positive effect on purchase intention towards counterfeit products.

Method

According to Devi et al. (2022) , a descriptive and correlational research design is preferable to measure the relationship among variables and the impact of independent variables on dependent variable in a natural setting. Accordingly, this study followed a descriptive and correlational research design because researchers did not manipulate any variable and assessed the relationship and impact of price consciousness, personal gratification, social influence, and perceived risks on the purchase intention of counterfeit products. The population for this study constitutes full-time teachers and students studying in different streams of bachelor-level and master's-level programs in Madhyabindu Multiple Campus Kawasoti and employees of different commercial bank branch offices operating in the Kawasoti area. Madhyabindu Multiple Campus (2024) annual report states that altogether 1377 Students are studying in bachelor-level and master's-level programs and 63 Full-time teachers are in service. However, the exact number of bank employees associated with the branch office of different commercial banks in the Kawaosti area is not publicly recorded. Thus, researchers purposively selected respondents for this study. Selection of this sampling technique was validated by many scholars, such as (Budiman & Wijaya, 2014; MS & Rouly, 2020) on counterfeit product purchase intention context. The sample size of this study was 200, which is sufficient as per past studies such as (Adhikari & Biswakarma, 2017; Lan et

al., 2009; Malla & Yukongdi, 2020; Mutmainah et al., 2024) on purchase intention towards counterfeit products. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Which consists of 21 five-point Likert scale items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, these items were related to all five variables. Accordingly, frequency of buying counterfeit products in the past and location of purchase were also included. Similarly, demographic information such as gender, age, educational attainment, family monthly income, and profession of respondents were also taken into consideration. All items related to five variables were adopted from different scholarly articles such as price consciousness.(Hoon Ang et al., 2001; Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Rihn et al., 2018), personal gratification (Phau et al., 2009), perceived risk (Elsantil & Bedair, 2022; Riquelme et al., 2012; Tseng et al., 2021), social influence (Noor & Muhammad, 2019) and purchase intention (Mayasari et al., 2022; Tunçel, 2022). This research was done by collecting primary sources of data. For this, a total of 250 self-administered structured questionnaires were distributed among university students, teachers, and bank employees, locating them at campus premises and branch offices of different commercial banks located in the Kawasoti area. Out of these, only 200 complete responses were further processed using MS-Excel and SPSS. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, correlation, regression analysis, and one-way ANOVA tests were employed to analyze collected data and draw findings and conclusions.

Results

Demographic information was collected in terms of age, gender, profession, educational attainment, and income level (see Table 1). Out of 200 respondents, the majority (34.00%) belonged to the age group 24–29 years, followed by the age group 18–23 years (25.00%), 36 and above years (23.50%), and the age group 30–35 (17.50%). Similarly, 39% of respondents noted they were students, while 35.50% were bankers and the remaining 25.50% were teachers. The majority, i.e., 53.50% of respondents, were male, and the remaining 46.50% were female. Accordingly, 7 (3.50%) respondents were studied at intermediate and low levels, 80 (40%) at bachelor's level, and 56.50% (113) at master's and above. Additionally, the income level of respondents depicts that about 65% of respondents' monthly family income was Rs 50,000 or more, and only 15% of respondents belonged to the monthly family income level up to Rs 30,000.

This study reveals that only 5% of respondents never buy counterfeit footwear, but nearly 50% of respondents bought such products more than once in a year. Based on the data

revealed from the respondents, 32% claim that they never bought a counterfeit watch. While nearly 56% had bought a counterfeit watch at least once in a year, only 12.5% of respondents bought such a product frequently throughout the year (see Table 2). As shown in Table 3, almost 98.5% of respondents bought counterfeit clothes at least one time in a year, and approximately 72% of respondents bought the same product more than one time in a year. While about 21% of respondents never bought cosmetic products. Similarly, 27% of respondents used the same product only two times in a year, and 26.50% of respondents bought such products once a month or more. Furthermore, as depicted in Table 4, only 3% of respondents preferred to buy the abovementioned counterfeit products such as footwear, watches, cosmetics, and clothes while celebrating holiday trips. Similarly, 5% of respondents bought such products from street vendors. While 12% of respondents preferred the online channel, the majority of respondents, i.e., 80%, bought counterfeit products from traditional outlets such as local markets and shops.

Table 1

Respondents Demographic Profile

Demographic variable	Category	n	%
Age	18-23	50	25.00
	24-29	68	34.00
	30-35	35	17.50
	36 and above	47	23.50
Profession	Students	78	39.00
	Teachers	51	25.50
	Bankers	71	35.50
Gender	Male	107	53.50
	Female	93	46.50
Education	Intermediate and below	7	03.50
	Bachelor	80	40.00
	Masters' and above	113	56.50
Monthly family income	Up to 30,000	30	15.00
(RS)	30,000-50,000	41	20.50
	50,000-70,000	66	33.00
	More than 70,000	63	31.50
Total		**200**	**100**

Table 2

Frequency of Buying Counterfeit Footwear and Watch

Description	n (Footwear)	%	n (Watch)	%
Never	10	5.00	64	32.00
Once in a year	94	47.00	111	55.50
More than once in a year	96	48.00	25	12.50

Table 3

Frequency of Buying Counterfeit Cosmetics and Cloths

Description	n	(Cosmetic) %	n (Clothes)	%
Never	41	20.50	3	1.50
Once in a year	52	26.00	54	27.00
Twice in a year	54	27.00	63	31.50
Once in month	42	21.00	60	30.00
More time in a month	11	05.50	20	10.00

Table 4

Location of Buying Counterfeit Products

Description	n	%
Holiday abroad	6	03.00
Local market	79	39.50
Street vendor	10	05.00
Shops	81	40.50
Online	24	12.00

Table 5 depicts the Pearson correlation matrix of independent variables and the dependent variable. As shown in the same table, price consciousness ($r = .566$, $p < 0.01$),

personal gratification (r = .526, p < 0.01), and social influence (r = .495, p < 0.01) have a positive significant correlation with purchase intention towards counterfeit products. But perceived risk (r = -0.105, p < 0.01) was negatively correlated with purchase intention.

Table 5

Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables

Price con.	Per. grat.	Per. risk	Soc. inf.	P. int.
Price conciousness 1	.406**	.096	.356**	.566**
Personal gratification	1	.313**	.391**	.526**
Perceived risk		1	.242**	-.105**
Social influence			1	.495**
Purchase intention				1

Note. N = 200, *p < 0.01, **p < 0.05

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare purchase intention towards counterfeit products across three different groups: university students, teachers, and bankers. This study found no statistically significant difference in purchase intention among three groups based on their profession, F (2, 197) = 0.114, p = .892 (see Table 6). Accordingly, it was also found that mean scores of purchase intention (students = 18.72, university teachers = 18.53, bankers = 18.73) among three professional groups were almost equal or identical (see Table 7).

Table 6

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig
Between groups	1.459	2	.729	.114	.892
Within groups	1258.416	197	6.388		
Total	1259.875	199			

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Purchase Intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Studying	78	18.7179	2.41692	.27366	18.1730	19.2629	11.00	24.00
Teaching	51	18.5294	2.59502	.36338	17.7996	19.2593	12.00	23.00
Banking	71	18.7324	2.59647	.30814	18.1178	19.3470	9.00	23.00
Total	200	18.6750	2.51615	.17792	18.3242	19.0258	9.00	24.00

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to examine internal consistency of variables. As suggested by (Hair et al., 2014) constructs having Cronbach's alpha (a > 0.70) are acceptable for further analysis. As shown in Table 8, all constructs meet the cutoff value of Cronbach's alpha. Likewise, fundamental assumptions for undertaking multiple regression analysis such as homoscedasticity, normality, multicollinearity, outliers, and influential data points were examined, assessing the value of scatter plots, histograms, normal probability plots, variance inflation factors, studentized deleted residuals, centered leverage values, and Cook's distance. The scatterplot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values showed that the residuals met the assumptions of homoscedasticity. Similarly, the histogram and normal probability plot of standardized residuals showed that the residuals met the assumption of normality. It was confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with the *p*-value being greater than 0.05. It was the same, like, there was no problem of multicollinearity, as can be seen by the VIF being 1.130 to 1.605 for each predictor (see Table 8).

Analyzing the studentized deleted residuals, it was concluded that there were no outliers on purchase intention since the absolute value of every studentized deleted residual was less than 3. Accordingly, analyzing the centered leverage values, it was concluded that there were no outliers in the set of independent variables. Eventually, it was found that there was no influential data point, as Cook's distance value was less than 1. As reported in Table 9, the multiple correlation coefficient (*R*) was .660; i.e., this model is able to predict 66% of the variance in actual purchase intention. Accordingly, *R2* value. 436 reported that four independent variables explained 43.6% of total variance of the dependent variable. Accordingly, the ANOVA table of multiple regression showed $F(4, 195) = 37.62$, $p < .001$, indicating at least one of the predictors' slope coefficients is statistically significant (see Table 10).

Table 8

Reliability Analysis, Variance Inflation Factor and Kolmogorov-Smironov Test

Variables	No of items	Cronbach alpha	Variance inflation f.	K-S value	Sig.
Price conciousness	4	.708	1.444	1.140	.14
Personal gratification	4	.895	1.459	1.150	.13
Perceived risk	4	.794	1.130	1.111	.18
Social influence	3	.788	1.605	1.232	.08
Purchase intention	6	.808		1.116	.17

Table 9

Model Summary

Model	*R*	R^2	Adjusted R^2	St. Error
1	.660[a]	.436	.424	1.9097

a Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

b Predictors: (Constant), Social Influence, Perceived Risk, Price Conciousness, Personal Gratification

Table 10

ANOVA

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
1	Regression	548.736	4	137.184	37.617	.000b
	Residual	711.139	195	3.647		
	Total	1259.875	199			

a Dependent variable: Purchase Intention

b Predictors: (Constant), Social Influence, Perceived Risk, Price Conciousness, Personal Gratification

Multiple regression analysis was undertaken using SPSS in order to examine the influence of four predictors, such as price consciousness, personal gratification, perceived risk, and social influence, on purchase intention towards counterfeit products. As reported in Table 11, the unstandardized beta coefficient revealed that price consciousness has the

strongest significant positive influence on purchase intention (β = .491, t = 5.418, p < .05) in the sense that an increase of every 1 unit in price consciousness results in an average increase in purchase intention by .491 units, holding other variables constant. Similarly, Personal Gratification (β = .342, t = 4.501, p < .05) and Social Influence (β = .159, t = 3.327, p < .05) also have positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention. However, perceived risk (β = -.046, t = -.728, p > .05) did not have a significant influence on purchase intention towards counterfeit products.

Table 11

Beta Coefficents

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta	*t*	Sig.
(Constant)	4.202	1.547		2.715	.007
Price conciousness	.491	.091	.350	5.418	.000
Personal gratification	.342	.076	.292	4.501	.000
Perceived risk	-.046	.063	-.042	-.728	.467
Social influence	.159	.069	.159	3.327	.021

a Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to compare the purchase intention of different professional groups towards counterfeit products in Kawasoti Municapility of Nepal. Accordingly, it was intended to assess the influence of four predictors such as price consciousness, personal gratification, perceived risk, and social influence on purchase intention of non-defective counterfeit products.

Descriptive findings of this study confirm that nearly all respondents preferred to purchase counterfeit clothes and footwear at least one time in a year. A significant number of respondents argued that they never like to buy counterfeit cosmetics and watches. It indicates the hierarchy of consumers' preferences towards different counterfeit products. The findings suggest that clothes and footwear are highly visible and low-functional-risk products, so consumers may prefer to attain the functional benefit and prestige value of original brand names via counterfeit products. While, due to high concern towards their own health, safety,

and value for money, some consumers may never like to purchase counterfeit cosmetics and watches. The study revealed that almost all respondents preferred to buy such products from local markets and traditional shops rather than online platforms and holiday abroad trips. This result poses the relevancy of easily accessible locations and traditional channels of distribution by which consumers trade counterfeit products.

Tajfel and Turner (2004) opined that individuals belong in to high economic status or profession distinguish them from other individuals associated in to low economic status or profession and like to buy branded or high status products. However, The empirical analysis of this study depicts no significant difference in purchase intentions towards counterfeit products across three different professional groups, including bankers, university students, and univerisity teachers in Nepal. This contradictory result indicates that counterfeit consumption has defeated fundamental assumptions of socio-economic boundaries minimizing social risk and offering benefits. As peers or other people are not able to recognize whether the product is fake or original. Accordingly, even elight groups (bankers, and university teachers) may have economic buying motives as like students.

Empirical findings of this study revealed significant and positive influence of price conciousness in purchase intention of counterfeit products. It means inspite of professional identity as university teachers, students and bankers, all individuals like to buy cheaper priced products to save money. This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Budiman & Wijaya, 2014; Majeed et al., 2024; Malla & Yukongdi, 2020). Accordingly, this study validated positive and statistically significant association between personal gratificationa and purchase intention towards counterfeit products. The finding is alligns with several studies such as (Farooq & Moon, 2025; Phau et al., 2009; Tunçel, 2022). In non deceptive counterfeit, consumers knowingly buy fake products so this result indicates that Nepali consumers belonged with divergent professional groups feel pride and sense of accomplishment if they are able to buy duplicate products having same logo, design, colour, and visual performance as like original one. Similarly, the result of this study confirms positive and significant relationship between social influence and purchase intention. This result highlights the impact of belonggingness in different groups and interpersonal interactions of consumers in their buying behavior. As, currently, almost consumers are associated with different groups physically and virtually using different social media platforms. Accordingly, they are influenced by their nears and digital peer groups opinions, suggestions, lifestyle pattern and like to show own status and identity in society or belonged

group even buying fake products. This pattern of result is similar to the conclusions of previous studies (Hidayat & Diwasasri, 2013; Mayasari et al., 2022; Noor & Muhammad, 2019). Many scholars such as (Al Balushi et al., 2024; Elsantil & Bedair, 2022; Malla & Yukongdi, 2020; Tseng et al., 2021; Wu & Zhao, 2021) have found that higher perceived risk (perfomance, economic, social status health or physical, psychological, durability) statistically reduce consumers' attitude or intention to purchase counterfeit products. Contradictory to these findings, in this study, negative but statistically insignificant relationship was found between perceive risk and purchase intention towards counterfeit products. The negative relationship suggest that as risk increases consumers' intention to buy counterfiet product decreases. Such relationship alligns with different consumer behavior theories along with the empirical findings of many studies (Chiu & Leng, 2015; Phau et al., 2009; Pueschel et al., 2017). This finding suggest that university teachers, bankers, and students are aware about the impact of undesirable risk factors on their buying intention of counterfeit products. But, statistically insignifiact relationship between perceived risk and purchase intention indicates no influence of risk factors on their purchase intention of counterfeit products. So recognition of risk does not change their purchase intention. This result suggest that, despite sound financial conditions and high professional recognitions, in Kawasoti, bankers and university teachers do not feel any discomfort to buy counterfeit products. Similar to university students, they are price savvy over products' quality, durability, and functionality. Furthermore, they do not have any fear of loosing health condition and self image while intend to buy counterfeit products. This is a pionner study in Nepalese context. So, its findings are useful to policy makers for enacting proper laws against the production, distribution and usage of fake products. Accordingly, business organizations could able to undertake awareness campaign against the use of fake product and extend brand value introducing affordable authentic products.

This research was carried out collecting information from students and teachers of one public campus affilitated to Tribhuvan University and bankers engage in different banks' branch offices situated in Kawasoti Municipality. Thus, its findings may lack external vailidity. Similar research can undertake in the future extending sample size and incorporating respondents from many higher educational institutions affilitated to different Universities and located in different geographical areas of Nepal. Accordingly, respondents were selected purposively, it is practicable to do similar research using probability sampling technique (stratified random sampling) for generalize findings to the entire population of

university teachers, students and bank employees. In addition to this, the study focused only four product lines such as cosmetics, clothes, footwears, and watches. However, product items with in each product lines related information was not disseminated. Thus, its findings covered broad prospective only rather then various product items with in each product lines. Researchers are suggested to do such research in the future considering different product items such as make up, nail care, skin care, hare care in cosmetics and so on in each product lines.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that despite hetrogenity in profession and income level, bankers, university teachers, and students do not have any differences in purchase intention towards counterfeit products in Kawasoti Municipality. Market penetration rate of counterfeit footwears, and cosmetics, are greater than counterfeit cosmetics and watches. In this area, different professional groups people are price sensitive and value maximizers so they prefer to buy fake products knowingly. Accordingly, they are influenced by their nears and dears and like to buy such products to be fitted in belonged group. Even having awareness about undesirable consequences from the use of fake products, they do not feel any risk or discomfort to buy fake products and demonstrate unethical buying behavior by divergent group of people alive in Kawasoti of Nepal.

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