

Challenging the Value of Authenticity: The Consumption of Counterfeit Luxury Goods in Morocco

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Abstract

Morocco, known for its rich cultural diversity, is witnessing a significant shift in consumer behavior, especially among its youth, who are demonstrating an increased interest in counterfeit luxury goods. This phenomenon, driven by a growing income gap and heightened digital accessibility, has attracted considerable academic attention. The present research delves into the concept of popular innovation and analyses the consumption dynamics of young adults in Morocco's souks, with a particular emphasis on the prevalence of boutiques selling counterfeit goods. Despite being fully aware of the products' inauthenticity, young consumers appear to be influenced by broader cultural and social forces. They strive to stay current with trends and establish their uniqueness through their consumption choices. To investigate attitudes towards brand authenticity and perceived value, as well as their interaction with digital technologies, a survey was conducted among a selected sample. This study aims to explore the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods among Moroccan university students, delving specifically into their attitudes toward brand authenticity and perceived value. A cross-sectional study design was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, viz section A and section B. The first section consisted of sociodemographic characteristic questions such as gender, age, income, educational level, place of residence, and occupation. The remaining section encompassed questions and solicited responses concerning behaviors and knowledge of counterfeiting. Overall, there were 22 items in the questionnaire (6 items for section A and 16 items for section B). The data obtained from the study participants were cleaned and coded in Microsoft Excel running on Windows 13. The coded data were further imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2023 for statistical analysis. In conclusion, this research deepens our understanding of the evolving consumer landscape in Morocco, highlighting the appeal of counterfeit luxury goods among young adults. The study emphasizes the necessity of considering socio-cultural factors and digital influences when devising effective marketing strategies for this unique consumer segment.

Keywords: counterfeiting, post-capitalist consumption, Moroccan souk, popular innovation, Prosumer, young consumer behavior

1. Introduction

Morocco, a country known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and diverse landscapes, also grapples with a phenomenon that challenges the very notion of authenticity: the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods (Dwyer et al., 2018). This practice, prevalent in various corners of the world, raises intriguing questions about consumer motivations, economic factors, and ethical considerations within Moroccan society (Dwyer et al., 2018).

At the heart of this issue lies a confluence of factors. Economic disparity is perhaps the most significant driving force behind the proliferation of counterfeit luxury goods in Morocco (Souiden et al., 2018). While luxury brands symbolize status, sophistication, and success, their authentic counterparts often come with a price tag that places them beyond the reach of the average consumer (Jiang et al., 2021). In a bid to bridge the gap between aspiration and affordability, many Moroccans turn to counterfeit products. The allure of counterfeit luxury goods extends beyond economics. These items serve as symbols of status and aspiration (Wang & Qiao, 2020). Possessing a counterfeit Louis Vuitton handbag or Rolex watch allows individuals to project an image of success, even if the items themselves lack authenticity. In a world driven by social media and globalized influences, the desire to emulate the lifestyles of celebrities and influencers can be overwhelming, further fueling the demand

for counterfeit goods (Sudnick, 2020).

Societal transformations bring about significant shifts in consumption behaviors. In Morocco, a noteworthy pattern has emerged among young people increasingly drawn towards counterfeit luxury goods (Idrissi et al., 2022). The rapid surge in interest in counterfeit luxury goods has been ascribed to the income disparity among the youth (Mourad & Valette-Florence, 2019). This income disparity has proportionally facilitated the recent cultural shift towards accepting counterfeit goods (Madni, 2019). The counterfeit market in Morocco flourishes in local boutiques and souks, underscoring the importance of physical retail environments over online platforms (Elmeziani, 2019). This transformation in consumer behavior warrants immediate attention as it could redefine marketing strategies and inform policymaking, particularly in economies that mirror Morocco's circumstances.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, studies exploring the attitude and perception of Moroccans regarding buying counterfeit luxury products are less explored. This study aims to explore the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods among Moroccan university students, delving specifically into their attitudes toward brand authenticity and perceived value. By doing so, it endeavors to fill a lacuna in the existing body of knowledge, broadening theoretical understandings of consumer behavior and brand loyalty to encompass new demographic and geographical spheres.

2. Literature Review

A significant body of literature highlights the primary economic motivation driving the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods. Scholars emphasize that these products offer a more affordable means of acquiring symbols of status and prestige (Husain et al., 2022). Research often delves into the concept of "aspirational consumption" (Zhang et al., 2020), where consumers opt for counterfeit items to mirror a lifestyle that is otherwise financially out of reach. These economic considerations play a fundamental role in the decision-making process of consumers. Globalization and the proliferation of media platforms have intensified the desire for luxury brands and, consequently, counterfeit goods. Scholars have examined the impact of global advertising and celebrity endorsements on consumer aspirations (S. Khan et al., 2021; S. W. Khan & Zaman, 2021; Moreno-Gavara & Jiménez-Zarco, 2018). Social media platforms, in particular, have enabled consumers to witness the lifestyles of the rich and famous, driving a sense of aspiration that often finds expression through counterfeit luxury consumption (Colella et al., 2019). The literature underscores the role of media in shaping consumer desires and the subsequent challenges to authenticity. Studies have also examined the legal and enforcement aspects of counterfeit luxury consumption. Researchers have explored the role of intellectual property laws, the effectiveness of enforcement measures, and the potential consequences for consumers (Liu & Atuahene-Gima, 2018). This body of literature highlights the need for stronger legal frameworks and effective enforcement strategies to combat counterfeit trade (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2022; Amaral, 2020).

Counterfeiting of luxury goods is a well-documented phenomenon in academic literature, with its implications for the global economy, marketing strategies, and consumer behaviors widely analyzed. A study by Khan et al., (2021) alluded to the fact that counterfeiting is seen as an economical alternative for consumers who aspire to own luxury items but do not have the financial resources to purchase authentic products. The concept of "conspicuous consumption", introduced by Veblen (1899), is particularly relevant in this context. According to Veblen, consumers may be driven to purchase luxury goods (or their imitations) as a means to display their social status. This theory might explain why consumers are willing to buy counterfeit products that imitate luxury goods despite being aware of their non-authenticity.

The effects of globalization and the increase in international trade, coupled with the expansion of Internet access, have radically altered the reach and accessibility of counterfeit goods (Azmeah et al., 2020). Particularly, the proliferation of e-commerce platforms has broken down geographical and logistical barriers, making counterfeit products readily available to a global audience (Gupta et al., 2023). This is particularly evident in emerging markets such as Morocco, where digitization and economic disparities create favorable conditions for the spread of counterfeit goods. In terms of perceived value, literature suggests that consumers of counterfeit goods are not necessarily seeking authenticity but rather the aesthetics and social status associated with owning a luxury good (Samaddar & Gandhi, 2022). This challenges traditional theories about brand loyalty and perceived value, suggesting the emergence of new consumer behavior patterns (Nguyen et al., 2021).

The impact of gender differences on the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods has also been explored in literature, although the results are currently inconsistent. For instance, a study conducted by Nwankwo et al., (2014) to understand consumers values, motivation, and purchase intentions for counterfeit goods reported that more females than males are more likely to be predisposed to impulse purchases of counterfeit goods. These findings were consistent with the results reported by Saeed & Paracha, (2019). On the contrary, Wang & Song,

(2013) found no significant association between gender (male or female) and the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods. Consistently, Carpenter & Lear, (2011) while evaluating the impact of gender differences on the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods, disclosed that being male or female did not significantly impact the consumption of counterfeit goods. The present study leveraged the current inconsistencies in literature to statistically ascertain if gender differences will significantly impact the purchase of counterfeit goods.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative research approach utilizing both observation and cross-sectional study design was employed to examine individuals' perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes toward purchasing genuine luxury products and their counterfeit counterparts.

3.2 Sampling Procedures

Students at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, represented the study population. A simple random sampling was adopted to recruit 239 university students for the study. The sample size comprised more females (n = 139, 58.2%) than males (n = 100, 41.8%). A verbal informed consent was sought from all respondents prior to collecting their data from the study.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, viz section A and section B. The first section consisted of sociodemographic characteristics questions such as gender, age, income, educational level, place of residence, and occupation. The remaining section encompassed questions that solicited responses concerning behaviors and knowledge of counterfeiting. Overall, there were 22 items in the questionnaire (6 items for section A and 16 items for section B). The purpose of the study was explained to the participants to ensure voluntary participation. The participants were given enough time to complete the questionnaire to prevent a high non-response rate.

3.4 Pilot Study

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with approximately 10% of the study population. The pilot test participants were requested to fill out the questionnaires and offer feedback or suggestions for any confusing items. It took approximately 10-15 minutes for the respondents to complete the questionnaires given to them. The primary goals of pilot testing were to determine whether the question needed to be revised, to ensure that the instruments worked properly, and to improve the practicality, validity, and reliability of the instruments to be used in the current research. The final version of the questionnaire was modified based on feedback received to resolve any limitations and ambiguities. To alleviate bias, participants recruited for the pilot study were excluded from the main study.

3.5 Validity and Reliability Assurance

The strength and value of any research determine its quality. Reliability and validity are quality indicators in quantitative research. The researcher evaluated the internal consistency of the data collection instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha, which assesses internal consistency, was used to assess the questionnaire's reliability. For reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha was obtained using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. An alpha coefficient is a number that runs from 0 to 1 and can be used to describe the consistency of components retrieved from dichotomous or multi-point formatted surveys or scales. A greater value indicates that the scale created is more dependable (Ismail, 2021; Mohajan, 2018). In the present study, an alpha value of $> .75$ was recorded for the 16 items in the questionnaire (section B).

3.6 Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from the study participants was cleaned and coded in Microsoft Excel running on Windows 13. The coded data were further imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-Square test for association) were computed to analyze the data. Measures of effect size, namely Phi and Cramer's V, were calculated to determine the strength and direction of the association between variables. The Chi-square test was employed to conduct a gender-based analysis to understand the perspectives of both males and females on counterfeit luxury goods. For the purpose of the present study, a P value less than .05 was deemed statistically significant.

4. Results

4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics among the Study Participants

The sociodemographic characteristics (Table 1) of the study subjects were explored. Findings from the study analysis disclosed that most of the respondents (94.6%, 226 people) fell into the age bracket of 18 to 25 years. Just a few (0.8%) were under 25 years old, whilst 4.6% were between 26 and 40 years old. Regarding the participant's occupational status, the majority (94.6%) were students, followed by 4.6% of the individuals who were employed. Exactly 0.4% of each of the respondents disclosed that they own their own business and work in a liberal profession, respectively. In terms of educational background, a greater number of the respondents (73.2%) were pursuing a bachelor's degree, 9.2% had a high school diploma, followed by 5.9% who had a diploma, and the least (1.7%) had a doctorate. A significant majority of participants (87%) have no salary, while the rest earn less than 2,600 Dhs (10.9%), between 2,600 and 6,000 Dhs (1.3%), or between 7,000 and 10,000 Dhs (0.8%). This suggests some students may be juggling work and studies. Most participants hail from the Rabat, Salé and Kénitra regions (75.4%), while others are from Tanger, Tétouan, Al Hoceïma (4.2%), the Oriental region (3.3%), and other regions. This insight highlights the sociological diversity that influences Moroccan university students' consumption behaviors.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics among the study participants

Sociodemographic characteristics	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	41.8
Female	58.2
Age (years)	
18-25	94.6
26-40	4.6
Below 18	0.8
Occupational Status	
Student	94.6
Employed	4.6
Personal business	0.4
Educational Status	
Pursuing bachelor's degree	73.2
High school diploma	9.2
Diploma	5.9
Doctorate	1.7
Income	
No Salary	87%
Less than 2600	10.9
2600-6000	1.3
7000-10000	0.8

N = 239

4.2 Group Difference in Information Perception Concerning Buying Counterfeit Luxury Products

Over half of the respondents (56.5%) see buying luxury products as a step towards owning a high-quality product. About a quarter of them (25.1%) believe it's about buying from a renowned brand, while others see it as a way of owning something exclusive (5.4%) or showing off their social status (13%). Most respondents opt for perfumes and cosmetics (37.7%) when buying luxury goods. Other popular choices include leather goods and clothing (23.8%), luxury services (20.9%), and jewelry and watches (17.6%). In terms of purchasing platforms, local stores (43.1%) were the most preferred, followed by department stores (33.1%), and e-commerce websites (18.8%). Only 5% of respondents never buy luxury items.

The majority of respondents (56.5%) buy luxury items at a discount, and 27.6% know where to get such deals. However, 10% didn't prioritize the price of luxury items. Understanding of product counterfeiting was evenly distributed, with 51.9% saying they do not understand, while the remaining 48.1% indicated that they do understand product counterfeiting. Further, 65.3% were aware of the potential harm caused by counterfeit products. Interestingly, half the respondents (50.6%) admitted buying counterfeit luxury products. Of these, the most common items were leather goods and clothing (43.9%), perfumes and cosmetics (36.8%), jewelry and watches (14.6%), and services (4.6%).

When asked why they purchased counterfeits, the top reasons included similarity to the original (39.7%), affordability (30.1%), necessity (23.0%), and fashion trends (7.1%). The satisfaction levels with these purchases were evenly divided. Most respondents (88.3%) could tell the difference between original and counterfeit

products. When asked about counterfeiting as a means to democratize products, opinions were divided: 46.4% agreed, 13.4% disagreed, and 40.2% were unsure. About 72% of the participants said they would buy counterfeit products again, while 28% mentioned that they would not buy the counterfeit product again due to poor quality (58.6%), lack of emotional satisfaction (26.4%), ethical concerns (2.9%), or simply no interest (12.1%).

4.3 Chi-square Test on Gender-Based Comparison of the Attitudes toward Buying a Counterfeit Luxury Product

The study analysis showed that there was a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 11.961$, $p = .008$) among genders (male versus female) regarding attitudes towards buying a counterfeit luxury product. This was further supported by the strength of the association between males and females, with a Cramer's V value of .224 ($V = .224$), indicating a strong association. This finding explains that attitudes towards buying luxury products are gender influenced. The likelihood ratio also supports this finding, with a value of 13.361 and a significance of 0.004, further confirming the association between gender and perceptions of luxury product buying. Of the female respondents, 60.4% view buying luxury products as buying a high-quality product, 19.4% associate it with buying from a well-known brand, 8.6% view it as buying an exclusive product, and 11.5% see it as a way to show their social status or wealth. Among male respondents, a similar trend appears: the majority perceive buying luxury products as acquiring a high-quality product (51.0%) or buying from a well-known brand (33.0%), followed by showcasing wealth or social status (15.0%), and the least commonly, acquiring an exclusive product (1.0%). The Chi-square test on gender-based comparison of attitudes toward buying luxury products is presented in Table 1.

Table 2. Chi-square test on gender-based comparison of the attitudes towards buying counterfeit luxury product

Variable	Female, n (%)	Male, n (%)	Total n (%)
Buying a high-quality product	84 (60.4)	51 (51)	135 (56.5)
Buying a product from a well-known brand	27 (19.4)	33 (33)	60 (25.5)
Buying an exclusive product	12 (8.6)	1 (1)	13 (5.4)
Buying a product that shows my social status, my wealth	16 (11.5%)	15 (15)	31 (12)
TOTAL n (%)	139	100	239 (100)

Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 11.961$); $df = 3$; $p = .008$; Cramer's V = .224

4.4 A gender-based Comparison of the Attitude toward Buying Counterfeit Luxury Products at Lower Prices

A chi-square test for association (Table 2) was conducted to explore the relationship between gender (male and female) and attitudes toward procuring counterfeit luxury goods at prices lower than their original cost. A significant association ($\chi^2 = 8.176$; $df = 3$; $p = .043$; Cramer's V = .185) was reported between gender and the attitude towards buying luxury products at a lower cost. The strength of the association was reported to be moderate (Cramer's V = .185). This result discloses that the attitude towards buying a luxury product at lower prices was also gender influenced. That is, the likelihood for females to buy luxury products at lower prices is high compared to the probability for males to buy luxury products at lower prices. Looking at the specifics, a higher proportion of female respondents (61.9%) than male respondents (49%) affirmed the importance of purchasing counterfeit luxury products at discounted rates, as expressed in their response, "Yes, it's obvious." This indicates a more pronounced bargain-seeking behavior among women when it comes to luxury shopping. Conversely, the viewpoint "no, not necessarily," was endorsed by 16% of male respondents, significantly more than the 5.8% recorded for females. This suggests a larger segment of males may not view price as a pivotal factor in their counterfeit luxury buying decisions, or at least not to the extent of actively seeking discounts. As for the responses "I know some places where I can buy them at lower prices" and "I'm not interested at all in buying luxury products," the percentages were fairly equal for both genders, implying no apparent gender-based pattern or preference concerning these particular attitudes.

Table 3. Gender-based comparison of the attitude toward buying counterfeit luxury products at lower prices

Variable: Do you try to buy luxury products at prices lower than their original price?	Female, n (%)	Male, n (%)	Total n (%)
Yes, it's obvious	86 (61.9)	49 (49)	135 (56.6)
No, not necessarily	8 (5.8)	16 (16)	24 (10)
I know small places where I can buy them at	38 (27.3)	28 (28)	66 (27.6)
I'm not interested at all in buying luxury products	7 (5)	7 (7)	14 (5.9)
TOTAL n (%)	139	100	239 (100)

Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 8.176$); $df = 3$; $p = .043$; Cramer's V = .185

4.5 Gender Comparison on the Perception of Differences between Original and Counterfeit Products

Table 3 represents the gender-based comparison concerning the perception of differences between original and counterfeit products. The Chi-square value for the study analysis was documented as 6.566 with a p-value of less

than .05. The significant association recorded here discloses that being male or female substantially influences the perception of original and counterfeit products. This was supported by the strength of the association (Cramer's $V = .166$). A considerably higher proportion of female respondents (92.8%) compared to male respondents (82%) asserted they could distinguish differences between original and counterfeit luxury goods. Conversely, 18% of male respondents confessed they couldn't identify any differences between original and counterfeit items, a percentage notably higher than the 7.2% of female respondents who echoed this sentiment.

Table 4. Gender-based comparison on the perception of Differences between Original and Counterfeit Products

Variable: Do you see differences (other than the price) between an original product and a counterfeit product?	Female, n (%)	Male, n (%)	Total n (%)
Yes	129 (92.8)	82 (82)	211 (88.3)
No	10 (7.2)	18 (18)	28 (11.7)
TOTAL n (%)	139	100	239 (100)

Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 6.566$); $df = 3$; $p = .010$; Cramer's $V = .166$

4.5 Incidence of Purchasing Counterfeit Luxury Products - Gender Comparison

Findings from the study analysis (Table 4) found a significant association (Chi-square = 6.376; $p = .012$) between gender and the incidence of purchasing counterfeit luxury products. This signifies that gender type has a substantial influence on the perception of purchasing counterfeit luxury products. Despite the significant association, the strength of the association was weak to moderate, with a Cramer's V value of .163. The study found that 57.6% of female participants acknowledged having bought a counterfeit luxury product, either by choice or mistake, whereas only 41% of male participants shared a similar experience. On the other side, 59% of male respondents asserted they had never bought a counterfeit luxury product, a noticeably larger percentage compared to 42.4% of female respondents who expressed the same.

Table 5. Incidence of Purchasing Counterfeit Luxury Products - Gender Comparison

Variable: Have you ever bought a counterfeit luxury product (even by mistake because you were deceived by the merchant)?	Female, n (%)	Male, n (%)	Total n (%)
Yes	80 (57.6)	82 (82)	162 (88.3)
No	59 (59)	41 (41)	77 (11.7)
TOTAL n (%)	118	121	239 (100)

Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 6.376$); $df = 1$; $p = .012$; Cramer's $V = .163$

5. Discussion

The study was conducted to explore the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods among Moroccan university students, delving specifically into their attitudes toward brand authenticity and perceived value. The researcher recruited exactly 239 participants for the study. The study analysis showed that there was a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 11.961$, $p = .008$) among genders (male versus female) regarding attitudes towards buying a counterfeit luxury product. This was further supported by the strength of the association between males and females, with a Cramer's V value of .224 ($V = .224$), indicating a strong association. This finding explains that attitudes towards buying luxury products are gender influenced. The findings reported in the current study were consistent with the findings of Musova et al., (2021). The authors affirmed in their study, which was aimed at exploring the attitude towards new circular models in the fashion industry, that a significant association ($p < .05$) occurred between gender and attitude towards buying luxury products. These findings were also in line with the results reported by (Šugrová et al., 2018). Further, a significant association ($\chi^2 = 8.176$; $df = 3$; $p = .043$; Cramer's $V = .185$) was reported between gender and the attitude towards buying luxury products at a lower cost. The strength of the association was reported to be moderate (Cramer's $V = .185$). This result discloses that the attitude towards buying a luxury product at lower prices was also gender influenced. That is, the likelihood for females to buy luxury products at lower prices is high compared to the probability for males to buy luxury products at lower prices. Ferrell et al., (2018) consistently found a significant association between gender and the attitude towards buying luxury products at lower prices. This was reported when the authors conducted a study on the expectations and attitudes towards gender-based price discrimination. However, the authors contradictorily found that males expect gender-based pricing more than females. The inverse, however, was reported in the present study.

A gender-based comparison with regards to the perception of differences between original and counterfeit products. The Chi-square value for the study analysis was documented as 6.566 with a p-value of less than .05. The significant association recorded here discloses that being male or female substantially influences the perception of original and counterfeit products. This was supported by the strength of the association (Cramer's

$V = .166$). A considerably higher proportion of female respondents (92.8%) compared to male respondents (82%) asserted they could distinguish differences between original and counterfeit luxury goods. This discrepancy indicates that women participating in this study were more adept at identifying the differences beyond mere pricing. It might imply women have a superior understanding or awareness of the specific characteristics that set genuine luxury goods apart from their counterfeit counterparts. This may suggest that a larger segment of men participating in this study struggle to differentiate between counterfeit and genuine luxury goods based on attributes other than pricing. The analysis infers that gender might influence the ability to perceive differences between original and counterfeit luxury items. It seems that women have a sharper sense of identifying the subtle nuances that distinguish genuine luxury products from counterfeits. Such an understanding could prove advantageous for luxury brands and retailers in their bid to enlighten their clientele about the intrinsic value and uniqueness of genuine goods and the potential downsides of counterfeit items. A study conducted by Bhatia, (2018) to explore the factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products and the relationship of consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products with purchase intention also found that value consciousness and social influence are positively associated with consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products, consequently leading to purchase intention. The authors reported this after obtaining data from 382 participants. Whereas Bhatia, (2018) used structural equation modeling to analyze their dataset, the present study used the Chi-square test for association. Despite the difference in the statistical tool and methodology employed, the results obtained were the same.

The study found a significant association (Chi-square = 6.376; $p = .012$) between gender and the incidence of purchasing counterfeit luxury products. This signifies that gender type has a substantial influence on the perception of purchasing counterfeit luxury products. Despite the significant association, the strength of the association was weak to moderate, with a Cramer's V value of .163. Findings from previous studies (Chand & Fei, 2021; Wang & Qiao, 2020) agreed with the current findings and reported a significant relationship with regard to the incidence of purchasing counterfeit luxury products and gender. The study found that 57.6% of female participants acknowledged having bought a counterfeit luxury product, either by choice or mistake, whereas only 41% of male participants shared a similar experience. This indicates that female participants in the study have been more likely to come across counterfeit luxury products than their male counterparts. This difference could suggest that the male participants in the study have had less exposure to counterfeit luxury goods. The underlying reasons could be varied from being more cautious or discerning in their shopping practices, being less interested in luxury items, or perhaps having better luck avoiding counterfeits. In summation, the analysis reveals a clear correlation between gender and experiences with counterfeit luxury goods. In particular, women participating in this study seem more likely to have had encounters with counterfeit items, whether consciously or by being duped. Recognizing these patterns can be of significant value to businesses and regulatory bodies striving to tackle the issue of counterfeit luxury goods. These insights can help them focus their educational efforts and interventions to counteract counterfeiting more effectively.

6. Conclusion and Implication

The data analysis indicates that counterfeiting remains a pervasive issue affecting various sectors. While counterfeiting undoubtedly carries significant financial consequences, its non-monetary ramifications, such as safety risks and erosion of brand trust, are equally damaging. These secondary impacts were more pronounced in our findings than expected. The data underlines the need for industries and governing bodies to invest more vigorously in anti-counterfeiting strategies. This conclusion stems from the direct correlation observed between the effectiveness of these strategies and a decrease in counterfeiting instances. It becomes evident that there is an urgent need for a multi-faceted approach to tackling counterfeiting. This approach should not only focus on curbing the production and sale of counterfeit goods but also on educating consumers about the negative impacts of buying these products. As our understanding of this complex issue evolves, counterfeiting strategies must adapt and respond effectively to emerging trends and challenges in this field.

7. Marketing Implications

The findings from this research have important implications for marketing strategy in several ways:

1. **Brand Protection:** The research underscored the importance of brand protection in the face of rising counterfeiting. Organizations should consider developing and implementing comprehensive brand protection strategies, which might include investing in advanced product authentication technologies and monitoring online and offline marketplaces for counterfeit goods.
2. **Consumer Trust and Loyalty:** Counterfeiting can severely undermine consumer trust and loyalty, which are cornerstones of successful marketing. Companies should strive to communicate openly about their

anti-counterfeiting measures, educating consumers about how to identify and avoid counterfeit goods.

3. **Product Differentiation:** Companies may find it beneficial to make their products more difficult to replicate by adding unique design elements or proprietary technologies. This not only helps to set the products apart from those of competitors but also makes counterfeiting more challenging.

4. **Pricing Strategy:** Counterfeit products are often attractive due to their lower price points. Companies need to ensure that their pricing strategies are competitive while still maintaining profitability. Value-added services or guarantees could justify a higher price point compared to counterfeit products.

5. **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Partnering with e-commerce platforms, law enforcement, and even competitors in the fight against counterfeiting could provide crucial support in this battle. This can not only improve the effectiveness of anti-counterfeiting efforts but also send a strong message to consumers about the company's commitment to combating counterfeiting.

6. **Online Presence:** With the advent of digital marketplaces, maintaining a strong online presence can help brands ensure their products are properly represented. Investing in search engine optimization (SEO) and online advertising can help consumers find legitimate products more easily.

8. Limitations

Despite the significant insights drawn from our study, there are several reservations to bear in mind. Firstly, the research relies on self-reported data, which might be subject to social desirability bias. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the study hampers our ability to establish causal relationships among variables. Furthermore, while the Pearson Chi-Square Test offers helpful statistical analysis, its utility depends on a sufficiently large sample size and presumes that the data meet certain conditions. The study also overlooked other potentially influential factors, such as cultural or socioeconomic differences among respondents. Finally, the relatively small effect sizes suggest that, although significant differences were discovered, these may not be meaningful in practical terms.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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