

Ethical Perspective of Brand Imitation on Consumer Buying

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ABSTRACT- *A brand imitation is a product that copies a famous or a leading brand, using similar attributes, such as name, shape, logo, and design. Thus, in the brand owner's perception, brand imitation is an infringement of the core value of the original brand. Many countries have enacted relevant legislation to protect brands from the infringements of imitation. In the eyes of the imitated brand owners, brand imitation is an infringement of the original brand's equity. A copycat or a simulation is a copy of a product in form or substance with no attempt to actually duplicate the brand name. Shops sell look-alike Rolex and other famous watches the watch just mimics the look of a Rolex. However, they are attempting to profit from association with a brand and may face other legal challenges.*

Keywords- *Brand, Counterfeit, Gender, Imitations, Products*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Brands have a kind of universal language and brand names represent information about a variety of attributes linked to a product, such as its features, meaning, and quality. Branding makes it easy for consumers to talk about products as successful brands make firms sensitive to the upkeep of quality. Consumers understand that brands make life easier by reducing the risk of inferior or poor-quality goods. Besides actual physical differences in product/service attributes, brands are differentiated in terms of the subjective image they impress on the consumer's mind. Brand image is created through labelling, advertising, package design, and retail distribution. As the competition is increasing, brand imitations or piracy is the one of the major problems for brand leaders. In the process of brand imitation is imitators copies the special attributes of the leading brand such as name, symbol, shape, colour, packaging etc. and they are identically similar to widely popular and famous brand. Imitation products have been found to be a serious problem around the world indecent days. Counterfeiting is such a problem that causes havoc not only in economic activities but also affect social life as well. Imitation is the conscious or unconscious behaviour of copying others. It can be contrasted to innovation, which is an independent-minded move of leadership. It is not a completely passive behaviour to the extend there is some choice of who to imitate. Indeed, it is possible also just a partial or selective imitation. Usually, successful business people, opinion leaders, friends, a teacher, the family and the people exposed by media are among those who are imitated. In other cases, it's an average behaviour and not a specific agent to be imitated.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

There is a problem which faces by students. For purchasing of branded products here are the observations of some common brand imitation of problems. Imitation is an effective way for saving time and attention in decision-making. It is a common product of bounded rationality. It can arise also from risk aversion for being negatively judged. Imitation can further be a way to reduce choices dominated by internal emotional conflict. The imitation of other producers' price increase gives rise to inflation, not only because it spreads the rise across a large number of goods but also because it reduces the costs of increasing prices in terms of consumers' demand fall: to the extent that demand for one branded goods depends on the difference of price of that good with others, a quick imitation of price moves is a rule-of-thumb that guarantees the market shares of all.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Purpose - The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovering as yet

B. Objectives-

1. To understand Female student's perception for identifying brand imitation product.
2. To study the most significant factors influencing students on brand imitation.
3. To examine the effects of brand imitation on similar popular brand.

C Sampling Plan:

1 Sample techniques : Non-Probability
2 Sample Method : Convenience
3 Sample unit: Female Students
4 Sampling Instrument: structured questionnaire.
5 Sample size: 100
6. Research Design- Descriptive

D. Sources of Data:

Primary data: data which is collected from the researcher itself through various instruments and technique. Primary data is a first hand or fresh data which does not exist in nature; it is collected directly from the respondents through their answer or through questionnaire.

Secondary data: It is a type of data which is already been collected by some others and for a purpose other than the current project. It is collected from any other projects, journals, company websites, textbooks and company annual progress reports.

E. Limitation of The Study:

1. Information given by the respondents may be biased.
2. Restricted to Shivamogga city.
3. Different to collect more information due to time constraints.
4. Not possible to cover large population.
5. Some respondents are refused to participate.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Dr S. Nagasanthi&Jaseera.C. P (2008), in this article presents A Brand imitation is a emerged as part and parcel of modern day marketing strategies and Today's world, branding is more important than ever. Nowadays consumers are more conscious regarding each aspect of products. Even then certain producers introduce products by imitating branded products.
2. Diva deep Singh &Mitali Arora(np), this article presents The survey examined the role of different factors-economic and hedonic, social and psychological that influence consumer purchase behaviour in the case of luxury fashion counterfeits. The results help us understand the average profile of the consumer (in these markets) with her/his purchasing behaviour reflecting an intertwined connection between various economic, social and psychological factors.
3. AnochaAribarg, Neeraj Arora, Ty Henderson, YoungjuKim(2014),, Companies frequently encounter situations where their products are imitated by the competition. Imitation can take many forms including me-too products, legal knockoffs, and illegal counterfeits. While many products are imitated in some form or another, imitation often occurs when a product with high quality.
4. Hamed Mohammed Mujahed(2014), although brand managers and researchers have looked into ways to fight against imitation, these are still prevalent in today"s market. Researchers have found that one of the major reasons for the growing volume of imitations has been consumer demand. Thus, rather than studying

ways to reduce imitations, it is first important for brand managers and researchers to understand why consumers would knowingly buy imitations. The major issue is to understand how consumers evaluate brand imitations. Imitations consumption has recently attracted significant attention. This study examines factors affecting consumer purchase intention for imitation products. as a research object.

5. Kay Ka-Yuk Lai and Judith Lynne Zaichkowsky(1999), Trademark infringement is a big problem for international brands in Asia, especially among the three Chinese societies — the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. An exploratory study of the perceptions and attitudes of these consumers regarding their acceptability and willingness to purchase brands which imitate the look of multinational brands was carried out. The results showed the Hong Kong Chinese to be more aware and loyal to multinational brands.
6. Lee, Angela Y. and Aparna Labroo (2004). Being a form of processing fluency, perceptual processing fluency has been shown to affect evaluations. For example, Labroo, Dhar and Lee (2008) showed that when consumers are first primed with a visual identifier for a product (e.g., a dog), they subsequently process a product depicting the visual identifier on its packaging (e.g., a bottle of pet shampoo with a dog on its label) with greater ease and evaluate it more favorably relative to a product not depicting the visual identifier on its packaging (e.g., the same bottle of pet shampoo but without a dog on its label)
7. Van Horen, Femke; Pieters, Rik. (2012), We consider how the degree of brand differentiation and the number of competitive and imitation brands in the market determine the extent of the cost of brand switching, and how this affects the level of brand loyalty. We Conclude that: (1)As brand differentiation increases, the cost of brand switching Increases. (2)When the number of competitive brands, increases, the cost of switching brands from one to any other brand, decreases. Therefore, buyer loyalty is less consolidated and is more easily switched to another.
8. Wilke, Ricky; Zaichkowsky, Judith Lynne(1996), consider feature imitation to be unacceptable and unfair, which causes reactance toward the copycat brand. Yet, even though consumers are aware of the use of theme imitation, it is perceived to be more acceptable and less unfair, which helps copycat evaluation. Discusses the impact of brand imitation on innovation, competition, and brand equity. Problems associated with trademark laws governing brand imitation; Difference between imitation and counterfeit.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Demographic Profile

Table No: 4.1 Respondents demographic Profile

Sl.No	Variables	Components	No's	Percentage
1		Female	100	100
2	Year of study	MBA		
		1st year	29	29
		2nd year	32	32
		BE		
		1st Year	19	19
		2nd Year	04	04
		3rdYear	06	06
3	Degree qualification	4thYear	10	10
		B.com	31	31
		BBM/BBA	18	18
		BE	43	43
		BCA	08	08
4	Parents monthly income	Other	00	00
		Below 15000	28	28
		15000-20000	11	11
		20000-30000	47	47
5	Parent occupation	Above 30000	14	14
		Government employee	18	18

	Businessman	20	20
	Agriculturist	39	39
	Others	23	23

(Source-Primary source)

Interpretation-

1. Gender- 100%(100) respondents are Females
2. Year of Study-61%(61) respondents are MBA, 39%(39) respondents are BE
3. Degree Qualification- 31%(31) are B.com, 18%(18) are BBM/BBA, 43%(43) are BE, 8%(8) are BCA
4. Parent monthly income- 28%(28) are below Rs 15000, 11%(11) are Rs 15000-20000, 47%(47) are Rs 20000-30000, and 14%(14) are above Rs 30000.
5. Parents occupation-18% (18) are Government employee, 20%(20) are Businessman, 39%(39) are Agriculturist, 23%(23) are others.

2. Do you buy branded items?

Table No 2 Respondents understanding about Branded items

Sl. No	Yes	No
1	73	27

If Yes,

Table No 2.1

Sl. No	Variables	No's	%
1	Clothing	9	12
2	Electronic Gadgets	22	30
3	Beverages	2	3
4	Cosmetics	13	18
5	All of the above	27	37
	Total	73	100

(Source- Primary source)

(73%) brought branded items so, 22(30%) of the respondents brought Electronic gadgets as branded items because electronic gadgets can't be replaced again and again so they need surety, and 27(37%) respondents buy branded items on clothing, electronic gadgets, Beverages, Cosmetics items because most of the people are conscious about brand.

3. Do you believe that products provided by original brand are in accordance with my expectation?

Table No 3 Respondents expectations on bring original

Sl.No	Variables	No's	%
1	Strongly agree	25	25
2	Agree	41	41
3	Neutral	9	9
4	Disagree	24	24
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1
	Total	100	100

(Source- Primary source)

41(41%) respondents are agreed with their expectation on original brand, because original brand items satisfy the expectation of most customer, and 9(9%) respondents are Neutral, here they don't want to comment about the satisfying the expectation of branded items and 1(1%) respondent are Strongly disagreeing because of any branded items he had brought is not in the accordance with his expectation.

4. Does original brand supply very high quality products?

Table No 4. Respondents preference of buying High quality

Sl. No	Variables	No's	%
1	Completely satisfied	20	20
2	Satisfied	50	50
3	Moderate satisfied	02	02
4	Slightly satisfied	16	16
5	Not-at-all satisfied	12	12
	Total	100	100

(Source- Primary source)

50(50%) is satisfied that original brand supply high quality product because those products have long life and 12(12%) is not at all satisfied because they might not use the branded product.

5. Can you distinguish original brand from other brand?

Table No 5 Respondents distinguish original brand from other brand

Sl.no	Yes	No
1	39	61

If Yes,

Table No 5.1

Sl.No	Variable	No's	%
1	Completely satisfied	6	15
2	Satisfied	18	46
3	Moderate satisfied	5	13
4	Slightly satisfied	6	15
5	Not at all satisfied	4	11
	Total	39	100

(Source- Primary source)

18(46%) are satisfied because they can distinguish original brand and imitated brand by the price variable, and 4(11%) are not at all satisfied because they can distinguish the products by any factor.

6. Where did you heard about the brand product?

Table No 6 Respondents understanding on brand

Sl. No	Variables	No's	%
1	never heard about the imitated brand products	27	27
2	Newspaper	9	9
3	Internet	51	51
4	From friends and others	13	13
	Total	100	100

(Source: primary source)

51(51%) have heard about branded product in internet because now a day's internet is most used source of collecting information and 9(9%) of respondent have heard about branded product in newspaper because very less respondent read newspaper.

7. From where do you buy imitative brand products?

Table No 7 Respondents on Imitative Brand

Sl.No	Variables	No's	%
1	Internet	19	19
2	Shop	31	31
3	Super market	39	39
4	other	11	11
	Total	100	100

(Source: primary source)

39(39%) buy the branded product in super market because super market observes most of the customer and only 19(19%) of respondent buy branded product from internet because customer have less faith in online brought products.

8. You spend On the imitated brand products each year?

Table No 8 Respondents spending behaviour

Sl.No	Variables	No's	%
1	Below Rs.500	30	30
2	Rs.500-1000	24	24
3	Rs.1000-2000	38	38
4	More than Rs.2000	8	8
	Total	100	100

(Source: primary source)

38(38%) of respondent spend rs1000 to rs2000 per year on buying imitated product because they buy more product of imitated brand and only 8(8%) spend on buying imitated product because most of them do not believe on imitated products.

9. Mention factors that will influence your decision of buying brand products

Table No 8 Respondents influential factors on buying branded products

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Formula	Garret Ranking	Percentage
Personal gratification	2	17	13	13	11	12	24	6	1	1	5	82	5.51
Value awareness	0	1	3	6	22	23	14	23	8	0	15	70	15.44
Appearance	1	2	3	7	10	16	31	17	9	4	25	63	25.48
Brand	1	2	4	4	12	14	15	25	15	8	35	58	34.25
Price	1	4	6	5	8	9	18	23	16	10	45	52	45.97
Innovation	3	8	4	6	14	9	9	22	18	7	55	48	54.03
Function	0	4	6	6	11	13	14	15	19	12	65	42	65.75
Location	3	4	5	6	5	10	16	21	17	13	75	36	76.12
Advertisement	0	4	3	8	10	6	12	20	18	19	85	29	85.75
Purpose	1	1	4	11	18	13	11	12	6	23	95	18	95.08

Garret ranking column is obtained by seeing Garret ranking table with correspondent to ranking column

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Average	Rank
Personal gratification	164	1190	819	754	572	576	1008	216	29	18	534	53.46	1
Value awareness	0	70	189	348	1144	1104	588	828	232	0	4503	45.03	2
Appearance	82	140	189	406	520	768	1302	612	261	72	3986	39.86	9
Brand	82	140	252	232	624	672	630	900	435	144	4111	41.11	4
Price	82	280	378	290	416	432	756	828	464	180	4106	41.06	5
Innovation	246	560	252	348	728	432	378	792	522	126	4384	43.84	3
Function	0	280	378	348	572	624	588	540	551	216	4097	40.97	6
Location	246	280	315	348	260	480	672	756	493	234	4084	40.84	7
Advertisement	0	280	189	464	520	288	504	720	522	342	3829	38.29	10
Purpose	82	70	252	640	936	624	464	432	174	414	4088	40.88	8

(Sources-Primary source)

53.46% respondent has chosen personal gratification because it's their personal thinking about that product and 45.03% have chosen value awareness because here most of the respondent just want to raise their value by using branded products and only 38.29% of respondent have ranked advertisement as least

because advertisement will not bring much change in advertisement of real brand product and imitated product.

10. Will the imitated productions damage the manufacturers of original products?

Table No 10 Respondents understanding on how imitated products damages original products

Sl. No	Variables	No's	%
1	SA	22	22
2	Agree	39	39
3	Neutral	06	6
4	Disagree	17	17
5	SDA	16	16
	Total	100	100

(Source- primary data)

39(39%) respondents are agreed that imitated product damages manufacturer of original product when customer goes on buying imitated product the demand for original product may decrease for some instant, so it effect the manufacturer of original brand.

11. Selling and buying imitated products is a way to attack the big business

Table No 11 Respondents response on how imitated products can attach big corporation

Sl. No	Variables	No's	%
1	SA	26	26
2	Agree	34	34
3	Neutral	13	13
4	Disagree	22	22
5	SDA	05	5
	Total	100	100

(Source- primary data)

34(34%) are agreed the way to attack big business because branded product is produced by big business and if any imitated brand comes into market it will indirectly affect the big business and only 5(5%) are strongly disagree about this sentence because they don't know about the effect of the imitated product and big business.

12. Imitated product presents investment on innovation and brand building

Table No 12 Respondents reference on being innovative brand

Sl.No	Variables	No's	%
1	Strongly satisfied	25	25
2	Satisfied	30	30
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	39	39
4	Dissatisfied	6	6
	Total	100	100

(Source: primary source)

39(39%) of respondents says that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied about the imitated products innovation because they might not found any invention or value added to that imitated product.

IV. SUMMERY OF FINDINGS

- 61 respondents are from MBA and that off 29(29%) from 1st year, and 32% are from 2nd Year and rest of the respondents from BE in which 19% are from 1st Year, 4% are from 2nd Year, 6% are from 3rd Year, and 10% are from 4th Year.
- 31% are from B.com, 18% are from BBA/BBM, 43% are from BE, 8% are from BCA.
- 28% of their parent's income is below Rs 15000, 11% of their parent's income is between Rs 15000-20000, 47% of their parent's income is between Rs20000-30000, 14% of their parent's income is above Rs 30000.

- 18% of their parents are government employee, 20% of their parents are Businessman, 39% of their parents are agriculturist, and 23% are from other occupation.
- 73% of them buy branded items. 12% buy Clothing, 30% buy Electronic gadgets, 3% buy cosmetics and rest 37% buys all the listed products mentioned above in the questionnaire.
- 25% of them are strongly agreed, 41% are agreed, 9% are Neutral, 24% are disagreed, 1% are strongly disagree with the expectation of the brand.
- 20% are completely satisfied, 50% are satisfied, 2% are moderate satisfied, 16% are slightly satisfied, 12% are not-at-all satisfied, in regards with quality of products.
- 15% are completely satisfied, 46% are satisfied, 13% are moderate satisfied, 15% are slightly satisfied, and 11% are not at all satisfied are satisfied with the attractive advertising.
- 27% of the respondents never heard about the imitated products, 9% of the respondents heard the brand products from newspaper, 51% of the respondents heard the brand products from internet, 13% of the respondents heard brand products from friends and others.
- 19% of the respondents buy imitated products in internet, 31% of the respondents buy imitated products in shop, 39% of the respondents buy imitated products in super market, and 11% of the respondents buy imitated products in other market.
- 30% of the respondents spend below Rs.500 per year, 24% of the respondents spend Rs.500-1000 per year, 38% of the respondents spend Rs.1000-2000 per year and 8% of the respondents spend more than Rs.2000 per year for imitated brand products.
- 76% says that imitated brand product damage the economy and rest 24% says that imitated brand does not damage the economy
- 22% are strongly agree, 39% are agree, 6% are Neutral, 17% are disagree, 16% are strongly disagree, in regards with quality of products.
- 26% are strongly agree, 34% are agree, 13% are Neutral, 22% are disagree, 5% are strongly disagree, in regards that buying and selling imitated product is a way to attack big business.
- 25% are strongly satisfied, 30% respondent is satisfied, 39% respondent is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 6% respondent is dissatisfied that imitated product investment on innovation and brand building
- 37% are worried about the quality of imitated product and 53% respondent is not worried about the quality of imitated product and 10% don't want to comment upon that statement.
- 45% respondents say yes about imitated brand will change their brand image in future, and 42% respondent says no about imitated brand will change their brand image in future, and only 13% respondent not sure that imitated brand will change their brand image in future.

V. SUGESSTION

- Majority of the respondents buy Branded products. Most of them prefer to buy Electronic gadgets.
- Respondents among this survey says they have got information about imitated products by Newspaper and followed by Internet
- Per year respondents will spend 1000-2000 on imitated products and not worried of quality
- Respondents says that this imitated brand product have more personal gratification in their personal thinking
- According to research it can say, with this imitated brand product will change the image of branded products.

VI. CONCLUSION

The respondents for this survey are ladies. This survey talks about counterfeit imitated products of branded items. There are majority respondents say that they preferred to branded products. Satisfied with branded products and they are motely preferred gadgets. The concept of imitated brand products is mostly heard by internet and newspapers, where people are not worried of quality but buy it for personal gratification in personal thinking. People spend on it just to trail the imitated branded products to know how it works. The research believes that branded products may have changes or negative impact in its image by this imitated products and counterfeit goods. This imitated product has also bad impact on Indian economy as research studies.

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