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*Corresponding author: Rashid Heidari moghadam, Ergonomics, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Hamadan, Iran E-mail: dr_haidari@yahoo.com

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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Relationship between personality characteristics and attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods in the Iranian population

Mohammad Babamiri¹, Rashid Heidari moghadam¹*, Hamid Saeidnia² and Mehdi Zemestani³

Abstract: Due to the excessive amount of counterfeit goods in the Third World countries and the losses caused by the sale of these goods, this study attempts to investigate the relationship between personality characteristics (neuroticism. extroversion, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness) and attitudes toward purchase of counterfeit goods. This study is a cross-sectional type. The statistical population comprised graduate and undergraduate students of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. The sample included 700 people, selected randomly by simple sampling manner and response to the attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods questionnaire and NEO Personality Inventory. The SPSS16 software, independent t-test and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that there is a significant relationship between extroversion, openness and agreeableness with attitude toward counterfeited goods purchasing. The results also indicated that the mean difference of attitude toward counterfeit goods purchasing between gender, marital status and educational level were significant. Results indicated that personality characteristics affected consumers' attitude toward counterfeit goods purchasing and these personality characteristics can play a role in the reduction of counterfeit goods purchasing.

Subjects: Gender Studies - Soc Sci; Applied Social Psychology; Consumer Psychology; Behavioral Psychology

Keywords: Counterfeit goods; attitude; personality characteristic; purchase

1. Introduction

Counterfeiting is a significant and growing problem across the world that occurs both in developed and developing countries and not limited to few countries (Saeed & Paracha, 2019a). Without doubt, counterfeiting is followed by numerous economic losses. The cost of counterfeiting has been estimated over 200 billion dollars in the United States (Chaudhry et al., 2005) and 2.8 billion in the United Kingdom (Hoe et al., 2003) per year. Counterfeit goods refer to any unlawful product that violates

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am specialized in work psychology and I am interested in topics related to the work-place, social psychology and personality. It has always been interesting to me knowing the personality traits of people having certain behaviors. In this study, I have tried to answer a very small part of these questions.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The study of the causes of purchasing counterfeit goods by buyers has become an important issue in recent decades. This phenomenon can be studied in the purchase of a variety of products. In this field usually three areas are studied: buyer, the product itself and the culture. Knowing the personality traits of counterfeit goods buyers can be interesting. This study has addressed this issue.









intellectual property rights (Phillips, 2007) includeing patents, copyrights and trademarks (Chaudhry et al., 2005). Counterfeiting encompasses production, distribution and sale of a product with a brand in order to be undetectable from a trademark. Anyhow, not only just trademark is copied but also products with counterfeit mark are designed so similar to the original product (Forzley, 2003). Another behavior that can be considered counterfeiting encompasses use of original mark on non-original goods. Further, counterfeiting is witnessed in various products, but some industries are particularly influenced by counterfeiting (Reiss et al., 2004). Obvious examples of such products include luxury goods (Swami et al., 2009). Counterfeiting trademarks, in addition to rising economic loss, can reduce value of unique characteristics of genuine trademarks (Swami et al., 2009).

2. Theoretical literature and research background

The factors that might affect evaluation and purchasing of goods by consumers include price, similarity between counterfeit goods and original trademarks and efficiency; price has been recognized as the first factor which significantly affects consumer's perceptions. Most consumers enjoy owning a product similar to the original mark without paying high prices and compare the quality of counterfeit good with the little amount of money that consumer pays for it (Su, 2006). Shari and Halym (2006) showed that variables of attitude toward counterfeit products, awareness from value and characteristics of product predict the order for counterfeit video CD. Saeed and Paracha (2019b) showed that economic benefit, materialism and hedonic motive were related to consumer behavior about counterfeit luxury goods.

Review of the research literature shows that little research has been done on consumers of counterfeit goods especially about their personality. More importantly, if consumers do not consider purchasing counterfeit goods, production of such goods will be disappeared. Between factors that can influence behavior (such as purchasing), attitude toward a subject is very important. Attitude implies the feelings that a person has about a stimulus; in this regard, a person's attitude indicates how he thinks, feels and reacts to his surrounding area, e.a., toward counterfeit products (Samadi, 2007). Attitude includes a cognitive component that includes consumers' beliefs about a good or service. Emotional reactions to a subject (good/service) represent emotional component of an attitude. Behavioral component of attitude implies a person's tendency to reacting to a product or an activity in a particular way, e.g., decisions about purchasing or not purchasing a product and recommending trademark to friends and relatives (Na & Ping, 2002). A variety of studies at the area of consumers' behavior have shown that consumers' personality characteristic is one of the most important effective factors in their purchase behavior (i.e., behavioral component of their attitude). In this research, customers' attitude toward counterfeit goods is considered as a dependent variable because previous studies have shown that attitude is a good predictor of the purchase of counterfeit goods (Adhikari & Biswakarma, 2017; Augusto de Matos et al., 2007; Mai & Linh, 2017, Phau et al., 2009; Prakash & Pathak, 2017; Toklu & Baran, 2017; Wee et al., 1995; Wiedmann et al., 2012). So recognizing consumers' personality characteristics is important for better recognition of consumers and more likely prediction of their behavior and finally influencing their performance (Hsiang, 2003).

Theory of characteristics is the most useful theory in recognizing personality characteristics at area of marketing, and Big Five Model of personality among various models which exist for examining personality characteristic is one of the most authentic models that has been confirmed by many scholars (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006); further, this model has been used in various studies at the area of marketing. This model examines five important personality characteristics including neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. In point of view of most of the scholars, these five personality dimensions play a major role in consumers' behavior and decisions and finally their purchase behavior (Babai & Ahadi, 2010). Ang et al. (2001) had shown that the purchasers who have lower ethical standards will feel less sin in purchasing counterfeit products. They found that personality characteristics such as consciousness and integrity affect the purchase of counterfeit goods. Jiang et al. (2018) also showed the role of ethical antecedents in counterfeit goods purchasing behavior. Therefore, the study of personality



traits associated with the attitude toward buying counterfeit goods can help in setting policies, directing advertisements against counterfeit goods, identifying target groups for interventions. Iran's markets are home to a variety of counterfeit products that have caused great damage to Iran's growing economy. Previous studies have shown that many buyers purchase products despite being aware of the counterfeit products; therefore, this study focuses on the personality traits of the buyers (as a fundamental factor) rather than the characteristics of the counterfeit products (such as perceived features and perceived benefits). So this study seeks to answer the question of why do people buy these products despite knowing they are fake? Does the personality of the individual influence this behavior (which is harmful to both himself and his country)?

2.1. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between personality traits and attitude toward purchasing counterfeit goods.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in attitudes toward the purchase of counterfeit goods between different social groups (men and women, single and married, people with different education levels).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Design and participants

Statistical population and sampling method: this is a cross-sectional and correlational study in which statistical population consists of bachelor and master degree students of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. From them, 700 individuals were selected as sample group through simple random sampling method. The subjects participated in this study with informed consent. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS₁₆ software and Pearson correlation and independent *t*-test analysis method.

3.2. Instruments

In this study, data were collected using field method and two questionnaires as follows:

NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI): In this study, to measure personality characteristics, NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) has been used. This questionnaire has been developed by McCrae and Costa (1987), which measured five main factors of personality.

In this study, a short form of NEO Inventory called NEO-FFI consisting of 60 questions has been used. Scoring this questionnaire fulfills on 5-point Likert scale, which is arranged from totally agree to totally disagree. Cronbach's alpha obtained for each of scales was neuroticism (0.75), extroversion (0.68), openness (0.78), agreeableness (0.80) and conscientiousness (0.70).

Attitude toward the purchase of counterfeit goods questionnaire: To measure attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods, attitude measurement questionnaire of Ang et al. (2001) was used. Scoring all the questions fulfills on 7-point Likert scale, which is arranged from totally agree to totally disagree. The reliability coefficient obtained through Cronbach's alpha method has been equal to 0.53 in the present paper.

4. Findings

Selected demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

In sample group, 85.43% and 14.57% had bachelor and master degrees, respectively. The mean and standard deviation of subjects' age were equal to 22.74 and 2.15. First hypothesis indicates a significant relationship between personality characteristics including neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness and attitude toward purchase of counterfeit



Table 1. Demogra	phic characteristics		
		n/Mean	%/SD
Age		22.74	2.15
Gender	Male	236	33.71
	Female	464	66.29
Marital status	Single	568	81.14
	Married	132	18.86
Education level	Undergraduate	598	85.43
	Postgraduate	102	14.57

goods. According to Table 2, correlation coefficient between extroversion, openness and agreeableness with attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods was 0.183, -0.211 and 0.182, respectively, which were significant at p < 0.05. Further, the results of Table 2 indicate that a significant relationship does not exist between attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods with neuroticism and conscientiousness.

Second hypothesis was in this way that a significant difference existed between demographic groups in attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods. Table 3 represents the results of second hypothesis of research based on independent samples t-test. As the results in Table 3 indicate, mean of males' attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods has been greater than females and this difference is significant ($p \le 0.01$). The difference between undergraduate and graduate students ($p \le 0.01$) and single and married students (p = 0.01) has also been significant.

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical contributions

This study aims to examine relationship between personality characteristics and attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods. As expected, the results of research indicated that there is a weak but significant positive relationship between attitudes toward purchase of counterfeit goods and personality characteristics of extroversion, openness and agreeableness.

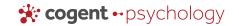
Extroversion has been positively related with impulsive and compulsive buying behaviors. Compulsive buying is an abnormal form of consumer behavior characterized by purchasing episodes in which a person feels unable to stop buying (Shahjehan et al., 2012). Impulsive in shopping means making quick decisions and shopping without thinking (Musnaini et al., 2015). Both obsessive-compulsive and practical obsessions can provide the basis for buying counterfeit good.

It is believed that consumers with agreeable/cooperative personality traits are more receptive to group norms (Han & Kim, 2019) and as previous research has shown the normative pressure that relevant and important others put on an individual plays an important role in the formation of purchase intention and behavior (Penz & Stottinger, 2005). Hence, a positive relationship between agreeableness and attitude toward purchase of counterfeit goods is expected, because these people are more likely to align themselves with the norms and since the purchase of counterfeit goods in society is not recognized as an official crime and there is no social norm against it, agreeable people are more likely than others to align themselves with the purchase of counterfeit goods.

In relation to openness, although the results of some studies have shown that openness positively predicts impulsive behavior (Wojciechowska, 2017), people with this trait tend to exchange experience and information during the purchasing processes (Cabrera et al., 2006). This process of knowledge exchange may study these individuals from the advantages of the

Table 2. Correlation coefficient	n coefficient						
Variables	2	Mean	Std. deviation		r ²	p-Value	Cronbach's alpha
Attitude	700	41.04	7.05	1	1	0.00	9.74
Neuroticism	700	33.94	8.04	01	0.00	90:0	89.0
Extroversion	700	38.53	6.63	.18	0.03	0.00	0.75
Openness	002	41.73	5.79	21	0.04	0.00	0.70
Agreeableness	700	40.91	6.51	.18	0.03	0.00	0.81
Conscientiousness	002	42.96	8.63	.01	0.00	0.07	0.78

Table 3. Differen	Table 3. Differences between demographic group	ographic groups in a		ıttitude toward counterfeit goods				
	Demographic characteristics	Z	Mean	Std. deviation	+-	đf	Effect size	p-Value
Gender	Female	797	40.21	4.06	-6.98	869	0.55	<i>P</i> ≤ 0.01
	Male	236	42.67	5.02				
Marital status	Single	568	41.21	3.32	2.38	869	0.23	<i>P</i> ≤ 0.01
	Married	132	40.28	6.24				
Education level	Undergraduate	598	41.36	3.45	5.41	869	0.58	<i>P</i> ≤ 0.01
	Postgraduate	102	39.15	5.46				



original goods and the disadvantages of the counterfeit goods, and as a result, their attitude toward the purchase of counterfeit goods will be negative.

The relationship between personality traits and attitudes toward buying counterfeit goods may be interpreted in the MAO model (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). According to this model, three factors determine consumer behavior: motivation, opportunity and ability. Personality traits are likely to affect motivation. Personality influences the subjective perception and information processing of the perceived relevant opportunities and treats to act. Personality characteristics are the antecedents of attitude formation and therefore behavioral outcome (Gountas, 2004). Thus, it can be said that personality traits affect motivation (the most important dimension of MAO) and motivation creates a positive attitude toward counterfeit goods, and as a result, buying behavior occurs.

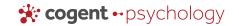
Few studies have looked at the relationship between gender, marital status and educational level with attitudes toward the purchase of counterfeit goods, and the findings have been contradictory in this regard (Swami et al., 2009). Our result showed that there is difference between male and female, married and single, postgraduate and undergraduate in dependent variable. Research shows that men are generally more likely to do unlawful activities (Carpenter & Lear, 2011). Some studies report that men and women tend to buy different counterfeit products (Swami et al., 2009), which reflects the difference between women and men in buying behavior. Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004) showed that women perceive a higher level of risk in online purchasing than do men. In Khor and Lim's (2019) research, male athletes showed greater positive attitude in relation to subjective norms and perceived behavior control to purchase counterfeit goods. Therefore, the perceived risk may be the cause of the difference between men and women. More risk perception on factors such as product features and perceived product benefits makes women more negative about buying counterfeit products.

In the case of marital status and education, the results also showed that single people and those with lower education had a more positive attitude toward purchasing counterfeit goods. Higher educated people usually buy fewer counterfeit products (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012). One of the reasons for this finding could be that people with higher education have more knowledge about counterfeit goods or they may not have a positive attitude to buying counterfeit goods simply because of their higher social status. On the other hand, one of the reasons for buying counterfeit goods is that people do not have the economic capacity to buy original goods. People with higher levels of education usually have higher economic power and therefore buy more original goods and do not have a positive attitude toward buying counterfeit goods. Regarding the relationship between demographic characteristics and the purchase of counterfeit goods, there are moderating variables such as culture, product type, socioeconomic class that can change the direction of this relationship.

One of our limitations was that it was not possible to examine the behavior of individuals in the real environment. Therefore, in subsequent studies, it is recommended that the participants' actual behavior be considered as a dependent variable. Also, the attitude to buying a particular product can also be an exciting topic for research.

5.2. Practical implications

Given that the results showed that there was a significant relationship between personality traits and attitudes toward buying counterfeit goods, paying attention to the personality traits in preventing people from buying counterfeit goods can be important. Given the high costs spent on advertising to prevent the purchase of counterfeit goods (both from the government's economic sector and from the businesses that produce the original products), these advertisements should target the cause of the purchasing counterfeit goods, which is rooted in the personality traits of buyers. The results showed that the positive attitude of extroverts and agreeable people toward buying counterfeit goods made these people buy counterfeit goods more than others; therefore, in order to prevent these people from buying counterfeit goods, this positive attitude



must be eliminated. Eliminating the positive attitude toward buying counterfeit goods can be done through ways such as informing about the losses that counterfeit goods bring to the country's economy, much lower quality of counterfeit goods than the original samples and so on. Based on MAO model, motivation is the most important factor that affects the behavior of buyers and people with different personality traits also have different motivations for shopping. Although the results should be interpreted cautiously, efforts to prevent the purchase of counterfeit products should also focus more on men, single and lower educated people.

5.3. Limitations and directions for future research

One of the limitations of this study is that this study was not conducted on a particular type of counterfeit goods, although the motivation for purchasing different counterfeit goods may be different; thus, conducting similar research on specific counterfeit goods may provide more knowledge in this area. Using other personality assessment models can also be helpful in this regard.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that people's personality is influential in their attitude toward buying counterfeit goods. In particular, this study found that personality traits of extroversion and agreeableness create a positive attitude, and openness creates a negative attitude toward buying counterfeit goods. But in conclusion, other social issues must also be considered. In societies like ours, the social class is of particular importance, so people do not even accept that the things they buy are counterfeit (in the presence of others), because acceptance of this problem is considered a social fraction. This makes it harder to find conclusions about the findings. In many cases, people do not know enough about the counterfeit goods or they are not familiar with the original goods. All of this makes our conclusions very cautious. Therefore, it cannot be easily understood that individuals with a specific personality trait take specific behaviors (in this study, purchase of counterfeit goods) because, as we have said, there are many factors involved in this behavior; social psychology must consider all of them: dominant culture, social level, economic level or even attitude toward the original goods, as researchers encountered something interesting them during this research. This was the attitude toward the purchase of original goods, which participants expressed with statements like this: original! It is all a lie!

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Author details

Mohammad Babamiri¹

E-mail: mohammad.babamiri@yahoo.com

ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0824-8567

Rashid Heidari moghadam¹ E-mail: dr_haidari@yahoo.com

Hamid Saeidnia²

E-mail: hamidsaednia@gmail.com

Mehdi Zemestani³ E-mail: m.zemestan@gmail.com

- Research Center for Health Sciences and Department of Ergonomics, School of Public Health, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Hamadan, Iran.
- ² Department of Ergonomics and Student Research Center, School of Public Health, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Hamadan, Iran.
- ³ Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran.

Disclosure statement

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