The Role of Hope and Attitude in Luxury Counterfeit Purchase Intention

Abstract

Although originated in categories such as apparel and luxury accessories, counterfeiting now affects a wide range of industries, representing a major economic threat. This great amount of counterfeit trade worldwide is shocking, and lead us to argue: what are the factors that influence the intention to purchase these products, especially regarding the consumption of luxury counterfeit brands? We believe that emotion may represent an important role in people's intention to purchase counterfeit goods. Besides, the attitude towards counterfeit goods may also imply variations of intention to purchase, playing a moderator role. Thus, this study aims to investigate the emotion hope for social status and attitude towards counterfeit goods as predictors of consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit products. We conduct an experiment with 45 undergraduates (51% female) from different universities, which design was a 2 (hope for social status; hopeful vs non-hope) x 2 (attitude towards counterfeit goods; positive vs negative) full factorial, between-subjects. Results confirmed that people felt hopeful after manipulation; however, future steps of this investigation should consider the use of another instrument of manipulation even more effective. Limitations of sample size do not allow statistical analysis of data.

Keywords: Hope; Attitude; Counterfeit.

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Introduction

Originally in product categories such as apparel and luxury accessories, counterfeiting now impacts a wide range of industries as a major economic threat. In 2015, the estimated trade worldwide for counterfeit goods was US$ 770 to US$ 960 billion, which represented more than 8% of world trade (Frontier Economics, 2011). In Brazil, the estimated has been US$ 15 billion per year (International Trademark Association, 2015). Prior research found the main factors influencing consumers' willingness to purchase counterfeit goods are integrity and the useful life of a counterfeit luxury brand (Phau, Sequeira & Dix, 2009); price (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988; Bloch, Bush, & Campbell, 1993); material values (Swami, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2009); past behavior (past purchases of counterfeits); or attitudes toward buying counterfeits (by economic and hedonic benefits) (Yoo & Lee, 2009).

According to these predictors and expanding perceptions of the field, we believe that emotion may also represent an important role in people's intention to purchase counterfeit goods. Many consumer researchers have turned their attention toward exploring the emotional components of the consumption experience (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Holak, & Havlena, 1992; Babin, Darden, & Babin,1998; Allard & White, 2015). Hope, which is the focus of our study, is a positive emotion. When people hope, they want to conquer an important outcome, they develop a high motivational force and they consider divergent routes to achieve their goal (Snyder, 2000). The probability of considering different routes would lead hopeful people to make wrong decisions because their great yearning to conquer what they want may blind risky options (MacInnis & Chun, 2006), as counterfeit products. Besides, their attitude towards counterfeit goods may imply variations of intention to purchase it (Wee, Ta & Cheok, 1995), playing a moderator role, once positive attitude may enhance intentions while negative attitude influences on reducing people's intention to consider these type of products.

This study aims to investigate hope for social status and attitude towards counterfeit goods as predictors of consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit products. The explanations of whether emotions may represent antecedents of the purchasing of counterfeits are quite limited, and the understanding of the motivations behind the purchase of such products remains undefined in the marketing literature. This research may be relevant to companies, to consumers, and public policies, considering that counterfeiting is now widely regarded as a serious social, economic, and political issue.

Literature Review

Emotions are central in human experience, and they are somehow involved in every venture that people engage, encouraging or inhibiting specific actions. When a consumer chooses a product based on experience, she tends to emphasize emotional aspects considering subjective benefits; these same emotional aspects may also affect the choice between similar alternatives in terms of utility (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Interest for emotions in scientific marketing research started in the 1980s, after the publication of seminal articles in the field (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Ahtola, 1985). Since then, the role of emotions in the discipline has gained notoriety by stimulating new research on the subject (Richins, 1997; Bagozzi, 1997; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). While emotions originate from the individual context of interpretations (Frijda, 1987; Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1991), they also play a role in

motivating behavior, influencing individuals to make decisions (Holbrook, Hirschman 1982; Ahtola, 1985).

One important motivational emotion is hope. It occurs when people are expecting something good, welcome and positive, beyond the control of the one who hopes (Pieper, 1994). It is present in our everyday life: we hope to look attractive, be part of a group, be safe or have a balanced life. It is a positive motivational state based on the success of energy directed to the motivational force (agency) and routes (pathways) needed to achieve the desired goal, which may be the cure of a disease, graduating from university or buying a luxury handbag (Snyder, 2000). In marketing, hope is a future-oriented positive emotion that varies as a function of the degree of yearning for an uncertain, yet the possible outcome and consumers experience hope in three levels: they hope for objects, for outcomes and selves (MacInnis & Chun, 2006). When people hope for selves, they may hope for recognition and status prompting consumption of high-end cars, luxury homes and appliances, luxury travel, and designer clothing (MacInnis & Chun, 2006). Status-seeking consumers are more likely to have a positive attitude towards counterfeits of luxury brands, due to incentives such as lower prices and product attributes and benefits that are similar to the original ones (Phau & Teah, 2009).

People usually have opinions about different issues and those are expressed when they are acting specific behaviors. It is called attitude, a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner concerning a given object (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007). Some studies explored the relationship between attitude toward counterfeit goods, (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007), (Kapferer & Michaut, 2014). Other used scales to evaluate Counterfeit Proneness (Sharma & Chan, 2011), that is also associated with the attitude towards purchase and consumption of counterfeit products. Thus, our investigation proposes to consider attitude as a moderator of the main effect, which is the hope for social status over the intention to purchase counterfeit goods. Whether consumers' have a positive attitude towards counterfeit products, they would have more willingness to consume it than whether they had a negative attitude. As such, we propose that:

H1: The higher the hope for social status the higher the increase of intention to purchase counterfeit goods.

H1a: Individuals' attitude towards counterfeit products moderates the relationship between hope for social status and intention to purchase counterfeit goods.

Methodology

We conduct a pretest among 45 undergraduates (51% female) from different universities, which voluntarily participated in the study. The design was a 2 (hope for social status; hopeful vs non-hope) x 2 (attitude towards counterfeit goods; positive vs negative) full factorial, between-subjects. As cited, we considered attitude as a moderator in our model, thus we used a six-item attitude scale (positive attitude toward buying counterfeit by economic benefits) and a five-item attitude scale (positive attitude toward buying counterfeit by hedonic benefits) proposed by Yoo & Lee (2009). However, during the face and content validation all invited researchers indicated the substitution of the hedonic benefits scale, suggesting a three-items attitude scale validated by Souza, Sousa, Ferreira & Mota (2015) to analyze the effect of this variable.

Participants received an online questionnaire in two situations (manipulation or control conditions). First, respondents answered demographics questions about sex, age, civil status,

and income. Next section presents a video, which was different in each situation (while one manipulated hope into participants, the other was about a neutral topic). Then, participants started to answer the questions of the scale, composed of three dimensions (counterfeit goods intention to purchase, positive attitude towards counterfeit by hedonic and economic benefits). In the following section, participants answered two items of manipulation check regarding whether they would write about the main propose of the study and what they had felt when viewed the video.

The videos (manipulation and control) was carefully chosen; high motivational force and the expectancy to perform outcomes were the main characteristics found in the stimuli video. Control condition participants watched neutral nature scenes. We assessed participants' inferences about their intention to purchase counterfeit goods using the five-item scale (purchase intention of counterfeits) proposed by Yoo & Lee (2009).

Results and Discussion

The answers of the manipulation check confirmed that people felt hopeful after viewing the stimuli video (78% pointed out hope), this guarantees the activation of hope into people. In other words, the experiment could manipulate the independent variable, hope for social status. However, respondents also pointed they felt happiness, which makes us believe that it is important to use an instrument of manipulation even more effective to guarantee the achievement of the real manipulation, without the interference of extraneous variables.

Our research may have some limitations regarding the sample amount. The total number of respondents do not allow rich statistical analysis of data; by the way, we designed a pretest so far, our main interest here is to affirm the correct application of the experiment and find mistakes and improvements for the next steps of our investigation. Further investigations should make an effort to include other variables to build a robust model, we suggest researchers would embrace moderators as past behavior, considering good or bad experiences with counterfeit products may represent willingness or aversion of the intention to repurchase. Social evaluation should be included too, once reactions and statements of observers may encourage or discourage intention to purchase counterfeit. Future research may also attempt to manipulate emotions as fear, happiness, guilt, shame, pride or nostalgia. They could observe variations of importance between emotions to see what is the most influencer or observe differences between positive and negative emotions and their impact over the intention to purchase.

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