

**Case Report***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Sally El Arabi*

# The Psychological, Social and Economic Effect of The Purchase of The Fake Brand in Ready-To-Wear Sector in The Saudi Arabia: Case Study Done on Saudi Women

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The American Marketing Association (2010) defines a brand name as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other characteristic intended to identify the good or service of a seller and to differentiate it from those of other sellers". customers interact with several brands and products over the course of their lives and build an attachment to a well-defined brand category (Schouten; MC Alexander 1985), which differs from one consumer to another, which is not always the same and it's not stable. One of the most important factors interfering here, in this relationship: the values. Those values perceived by this individual justify his consumption of such a product to the detriment of the other. In addition, the existence of a variety or patchwork of brands of "like" products from the same industry puts the consumer in a confusion.

As defined by Cordell, et al. 1996, counterfeiting is the reproduction of an identical brand to the original item. This phenomenon is constantly increasing in all sectors. The main mission of our doctoral research was to study the effect of counterfeiting on consumer purchasing behavior in the clothing and fashion industry. It is also part of the effect it has on the brand image and the experience provided by the original brand in the presence of counterfeiting in the same sector. Through the contribution of several theoretical fields, in addition to the analysis from the results of our conceptual model, we were able to better assimilate the purchasing behavior of the consumer of the legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector and to construct several observations concerning the factors that lead consumers to choose their favorite brand or not in the pres

ence of counterfeiting. Despite international pressure and efforts and laws approved and enforced, counterfeiting continues to grow to become a real industry that is proliferating in all sectors of activity and represent a real international economic failure.

Counterfeit products are generally manufactured in China; South Korea; Taiwan and South America. (Yoo and Lee, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. But during our study we have found that the research in Gulf countries in general, and in Saudi Arabia in particular, was limited by some articles despite the government pressure and efforts to limit the distribution and exportation of those counterfeit items.

Our study done by a quantitative test on Saudi women was mainly done to prove how the counterfeiting is affecting the image of the real brand, and how it's also affecting negatively the relation between the Saudi women consumer and the loyalty toward her favorite brands.

According to the result of our study, it can be concluded that:

The insensitivity to counterfeiting<sup>2</sup>: where consumer always prefers the choice of his favorite brand to which he is loyal even in the presence of the counterfeit version.

From a managerial perspective, efforts must be focused on consumers who are insensitive to counterfeiting, with the presence of counterfeit products and who engender caution among consumers. The problem then lies in the ignorance of the purchase of products that are actually counterfeit.

Consumers who are sensitive to counterfeiting are then less committed to the brand or a lack of loyalty to the legitimate clothing and fashion brand. This type of consumer represents a challenge for managers, since the favorable attitude towards counterfeiting is a primarily psychological variable to which several other factors are attached such as feelings, the need to consume this product, etc.

### Legitimate brand experience

How strongly does the brand experience influence consumer buying behavior in the presence of the counterfeit version of the legitimate clothing and fashion brand? The experience that the brand provides to these consumers plays a very important role in the consumer's purchasing choice in the clothing and fashion industry: "The notion of experience has become a key element in understanding consumer behavior and the main foundation of a new marketing approach: experiential marketing. Based on the idea that the current consumer seeks to live an extraordinary experiences (..)»<sup>3</sup>.

A consumer who had a good experience after several consecutive purchases is a consumer who will be more sensitive, and his purchasing behavior will be oriented towards his favorite brand even in the presence of counterfeiting. By purchasing a certain item

of clothing, the consumer always expects the brand to give them the same experience each time they consume<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, the consumer will be disappointed if the experience has changed, in particular when the brand is counterfeit without the consumer knowing it.

In Saudi Arabia, there is a diversity of large distribution and sales channels such as shopping malls and discount stores selling different brands at the same time which make the confusion easily presentable.

### Brand-related variables

- 1) Word of mouth
- 2) Commitment to the legitimate brand
- 3) The legitimate brand experience
- 4) The positive attitude towards counterfeiting

The data collection (statistical sample) and the modeling on the SPSS statistical system allowed us to verify the existence of the different relationships, either positive or negative between the different variables of our hypotheses (Table 1):

Table 1

Variables	Results (in absolute value)	Effect
Word of mouth / Intention to purchase legitimate brand	.881**	+
Attachement to the brand / Brand engagement or commitment	.615 **	+
Perceived risk / Intention to purchase the legitimate brand	.508 **	-
Perceived risk / Brand experience	.487**	-
Perceived risk/ Word-of-mouth	.375**	-
Brand confidence / Brand engagement	.375**	+
Brand experience /Word-of-mouth	.375**	+
Favorable attitude towards counterfeiting brand / Word-of-mouth	.340**	-
Brand engagement / brand loyalty	.340**	+
Brand loyalty / brand purchase intention	.339**	+

<sup>1</sup> HEC, *Comportement du consommateur*, Recueil de textes et de cas, 1990-1991, P.64.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Perrien, Emmanuel J. Chéron, Michel Zins, *Recherche en Marketing : Méthodes et décisions*, Gaëtan Morin Editeur, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Lavoisier | « *Revue française de gestion* » 2006/3 no 162 | pages 99 à 113.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceeding of the 25th International Congress of the AFM - London, May 14 and 15, 2009, Effects of the advertising message on the post-experience stage: exploratory study, The concept of experience raises several questions - theoretical, methodological and managerial (Marion 2003, Caru Cova 2002, Remy 2002).*

This analysis allowed us to develop an analysis of the results and meet the objectives of our research.

**Objective 1:** To study the reaction of the consumer of the legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector in the presence of counterfeiting.

**Objective 2:** Study the effect of counterfeiting on the experience provided by the legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector.

**Objective 3:** Study the relationship that consumers have with their legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector in the presence of counterfeiting.

### Academic contributions

Following the rigorous scientific methodologies used in our field of research, we were able to demonstrate the existing relationship between the different variables in relation to the brand with the intention to buy from the legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector, which variable positively affects the other, as well as the variables negatively affecting the purchase intention of the consumer of the legitimate brand in the targeted sector.

### Managerial contributions

Fashionect of different factors in Saudi Arabia on brand (clothing) buying behavior in the clothing and fashion industry. Saudi Arabian society is generally a closed society, but recently with the development of communication networks as well as distribution networks, Saudis in general, women in particular, are being influenced by leaders of opinion : the «Bloggers» and «influencers», which lead to a change in their lifestyle and their choice of clothes, accessories etc. For this, the analysis of our research result, in addition to our theoretical contributions, show that several factors is affecting the purchasing behavior of consumers in general, and those in Saudi Arabia in particular. We can then list the factors that play an essential role in the choice of lifestyle, taste as well as the buying behavior of the legitimate brand in the clothing and fashion sector :

### Psychological factors

As the research literature shows, the buying behavior of a cer-

tain brand is primarily a psychological variable.

The choice of a certain brand is linked to the feeling that it can bring to the individual. This feeling of attachment to this brand is due to a positive experience of pleasure, satisfaction or / and feeling of joy following the purchase of this brand.

Regarding the Saudi Arabian market : Consumers in general, and women in particular, are very attached to a brand which can lead to a feeling of emotional relation for this brand. This feeling is not developed as a result of the physical attributes that it provides for the consumer, but the feeling of satisfaction during its purchase.

### Socio-cultural factors

#### Social factors

«Subjective and objective social construction, the product of an interaction between an individual (or more), a place (the point of sale) and a consumption practice (shopping). « (Bouchet, 2004)» Indeed, if the consumption experience takes shape in a precise spatio-temporal framework «it is integrated into a sequence and continuity of experiences lived by the consumer ; each of these experiences being unique both interindividual<sup>1</sup> and intra-individual<sup>2</sup> (Hetzl, 2002 ; Sirieix and Filser, 2002)<sup>5</sup>. Saudi Arabian society is a society which keeps and appreciates its social and cultural customs. As an example, «social occasions» are very important to them. Such as gatherings of family, friends, colleagues etc.

So, for Saudi society, there is always time to share memories, information, news and various experiences. Subsequently, the choice of an item of clothing is not precisely a personal choice or an individual taste, it is then a choice based on the need to belong to a well-determined social group, as well as the need for resemblance and similarity with the latter<sup>6</sup>. The brand experience and word-of-mouth play a very important role. A woman then having a good brand experience, she recommends the purchase of this brand to other women (family, friends, colleagues). So, as our research results show, as well as the research of the literature researches, the brand experience positively affects word of mouth which also positively influences the brand's purchase intention in the market clothing and fashion sector.

<sup>5</sup> *Marketing, analyses et perspectives*, Francis Salerno et HervÉ Colas, collection *entreprendre vuibert Ladwein Ouvry* 2007, p 271-295).

<sup>6</sup> « *the commercial orientation in Saudi-Arabia* », Al Riyadh NewsPaper. Fahed BATERJI ,2013.

<sup>7</sup> « *Raiding of a famous facility selling fake international famous brand* », Al Mowaten newspaper (from an article issued from the ministry of commerce of Saudi Arabia July 2018), Faisal Abdel Kareem, 26 July 2018.

## Cultural factors

Cultural and social factors are two complementary and inseparable factors. The research literature, along with the responses and findings from our research, allowed us to conclude that branding in the Saudi market and fashion industry is based on shared tastes, ideas as well as preferences. In addition, always based on the cultural aspect of the market of our study, the existence of several occasions (as mentioned in the social factors), stimulates the high percentage of purchase for clothing brands for women (we focused on women, since men, have a unified cultural costume on their various occasions).

What reinforces the choice of the legitimate brand is the «cultural preference» of buying original brands. For Saudi women, buying a fake brand<sup>7</sup>, like exclusion from a group or a betrayal of the legitimate brand. So the woman does not buy the counterfeit for fear of not belonging to those around her. As a conclusion from the results of our research questionnaire, with the information provided by the research literature, the market in Saudi Arabia is one of the most attractive markets for international brands. With a very high purchasing power, the sale and distribution of brands is booming.

## Area of improvement

As a deduction, our recommendation for managers to protect the legitimate brands from counterfeiting is :

1. To reinforce the insensitivity to counterfeiting products : what lead consumers to buy only the legitimate brand without being affected by the presence of counterfeiting items.
2. To strengthen the brand experience through several strategic marketing actions.
  - A. By preserving the image of the legitimate brand : the exclusivity of distribution in specific shopping centers or stores which can never have counterfeit brands.
  - B. By making a noticeable differentiation in quality in order to limitate the imitation.
  - C. By stimulating the buying intention of the legitimate brand by using an effective and trustworthy marketing strategies: new marketing techniques , bloggers and leaders of opinion.

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## Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.