

Exploring the key factors that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics in Mumbai, India.

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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MSc in International Business Management

Griffith College Dublin

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4th of June of 2021

Candidate Declaration

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: Exploring the key factors that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics in Mumbai, India, submitted for the degree of **MSc in International Business Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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I'd want to express my gratitude to all of the participants for their time and contributions to this study. This dissertation would not have been possible without the participants' significant time and input.

Abstract

Exploring the key factors that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics in Mumbai, India

Harshada Mohan Shetty

This dissertation explores the key factors that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics, it considers and combines both psychographic and social factors involved in purchase decision. Consumers are influenced by a number of variables while purchasing counterfeit goods. Factors from key contribution to discussing people's actions through the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) were considered to explore and was combined with social factors.

The concentration is on Mumbai-based customers. The study adopts a qualitative technique and follows an interpretive philosophy with a sample size of seven interviews, the researcher has chosen non-probability sampling. The primary data was collected from semi-structured interviews, focused on the consumers who use cosmetics and have had experience in purchasing counterfeit cosmetics.

It was demonstrated in this study that the various psychographic and social factors played a major role in consumers choosing fake products over genuine products.

To summarise the conclusions of this study, the price is one of the primary motivators for consumers to acquire a counterfeit cosmetic product. The outcomes of this study also revealed that, in addition to price, other factors such as availability and expertise had a role in the purchase of counterfeit goods. Finally, it looks at how the rise of social media has increased the market for counterfeit cosmetics, as well as how social media influences customers to buy counterfeit cosmetics. Peer pressure and status consumption were also investigated.

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List of Acronyms

Acronyms	Full form
BPC	Beauty and Personal Care
FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
ASPA	Authentication Solution Providers Association
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ICC	International Chambers of Commerce
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

1. The dark side of beauty: Counterfeit cosmetic Industry

This research proposal will study the counterfeit cosmetic industry in Mumbai, India, and identify the factors that drive Indian consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics, Exploring non-deceptive counterfeit cosmetics as well. This thesis will use semi-structured interviews that will contribute to the analysis with new empirical evidence. The words 'I,' author,' researcher,' are used interchangeably in this paper.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

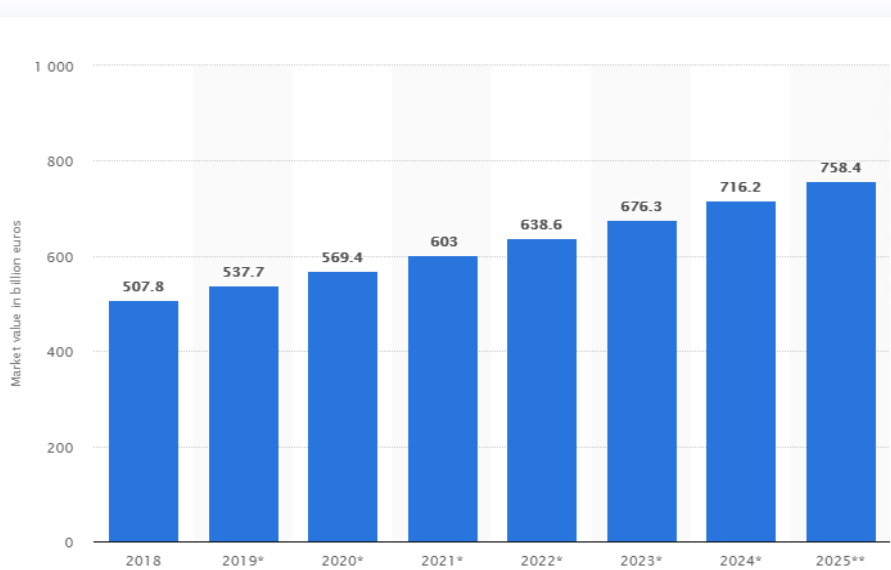
Humans are visual beings and status seekers, so it makes it plausible that we have been consistently obsessed with beauty. The attractiveness of others is the first one we notice about them. The notion that we need to be attractive and look a certain way has been internalized by a lot of people. Sadly, instead of a mere personal indulgence as it was traditionally, today's makeup is seen as a woman's requirement. Cosmetic products in the market have fed into the obsession culture amongst consumers.

In Ann Marie Britton's thesis, “The Beauty Industry's Influence on Women in Society”, fascination with cosmetics and beauty has also been explored. Britton's research attempted to demonstrate how women have been affected by the beauty industry and how this obsession has created a billion-dollar cosmetic industry that holds the power to shape and change women's perspective of beauty (Britton, 2012).

This obsession with beauty has led to immense growth in the cosmetics industry. “In 2018, the global cosmetic market grew an estimated 5.5 percent in comparison to the previous year. Skincare, haircare, make-up, perfumes, toiletries and deodorants, and oral cosmetics are the main product categories of the cosmetic market”(M. Ridder, 2020).

The Winning Report –“Global Cosmetics Market – Industry Trends and Forecast to 2026” published by Data Bridge Market Research affirms that “ Global Cosmetics Market is expected to rise from its initial estimated value of USD 435.47 Billion in 2018 to an estimated value of USD 648.31 Billion by 2026, registering a CAGR of 5.10% during the forecast period of 2019-2026”(Data Bridge Market Report, 2020). This shows that consumers have been spending higher levels of disposable revenue on cosmetics in recent years.

Figure 1: value of cosmetics markets worldwide from 2018 to 2025



Source: Statista, 2020

The above figures show the value of the worldwide cosmetics market from 2018 to 2025 and show how the cosmetics industry is growing and is projected to expand over the years, reaching up to US\$ 758.4 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2020).

With the worldwide beauty industry priced in the billions, India has started to take its place in the beauty market. India being one of the largest consumer markets is also uplifting itself in the beauty and cosmetics industry and is one of the fastest-growing consumer products sectors. As of 2015, the cosmetic industry's market size across India had a value of around seven billion U.S. dollars. It was forecast that this value would reach a value of US\$20 billion (Sandhya Keelery, 2020).

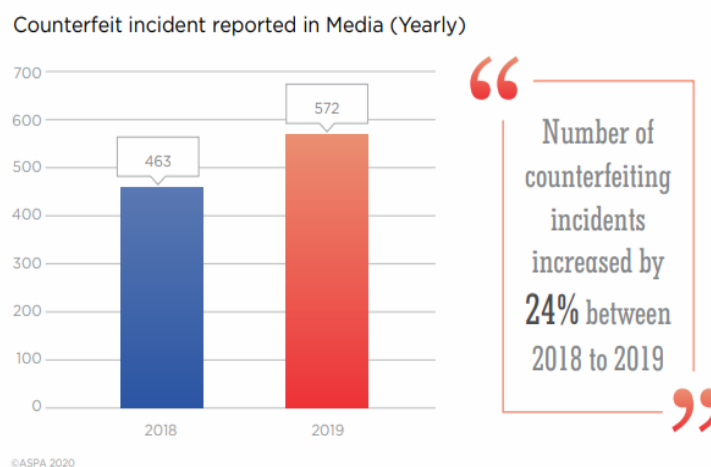
As per the report released by the Indian Beauty and Hygiene Association (IBHA), The Indian Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5-6%, from ~US\$ 8 billion in 2016 to ~US\$10 billion in 2021 (IBHA - A.T. Kearney report, 2017).

Now with e-commerce in India, any Indian lady, young lady, can order online in any part of the world, is turning out to be a turning point in India. The model of deep distribution that has always been a constraint on global brands has changed completely, it has become easier for global brands to sell their products.

Every opportunity and progress come up with its hurdles, the beauty boom of the nation comes with its challenges. One such big problem is counterfeit goods in the cosmetic industry.

Counterfeiting is a global problem. Grossman & Sapiro (1988) defined counterfeit products as Identical or similar versions of the trademarked goods sold on the market in order to benefit from the advantages of the particular branded products. These duplicate products are produced to persuade the customer that they are similar to the original and to make customers believe they are purchasing the original and trademarked item. It is rising at an unprecedented pace and, for such activities, India is a large market. It's no wonder that counterfeiters are taking advantage of this growing market, considering the mammoth financial opportunities counterfeit makeup provides. As per the reports published by the Indian Beauty and Hygiene Association (IBHA), "It is estimated that the current global counterfeit market is \$500-\$650 billion and accounts for 5-7% of global trade. An approximate Rs. 45,000 Crores is the Indian counterfeit industry in itself" (IBHA - A.T. Kearney report, 2017). With the technological advancement and the ease of access to social media and e-commerce websites for cosmetics and beauty goods, the possibility of counterfeit cosmetics invading the market has increased in several respects.

Figure 2: Counterfeit Index OF India (No of Counterfeit incidents in 2 years,2018-2019)

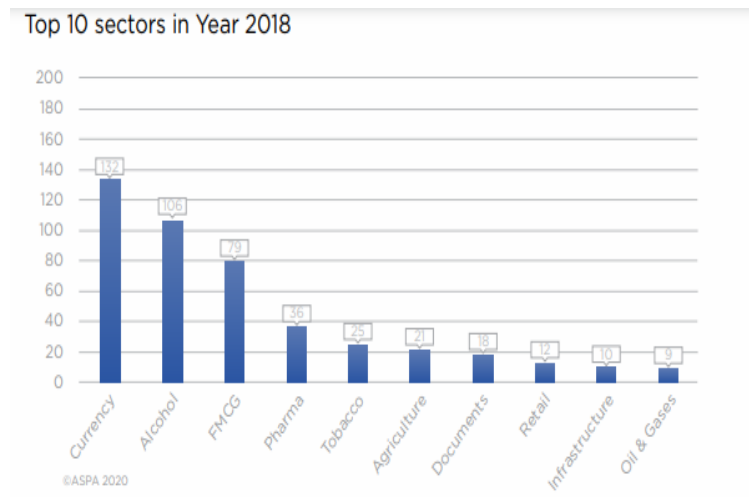


Source: Authentication Solution Providers Association (ASPA),2020

The graph above shows the rise of counterfeiting incidents in India over two years in 2018-2019.

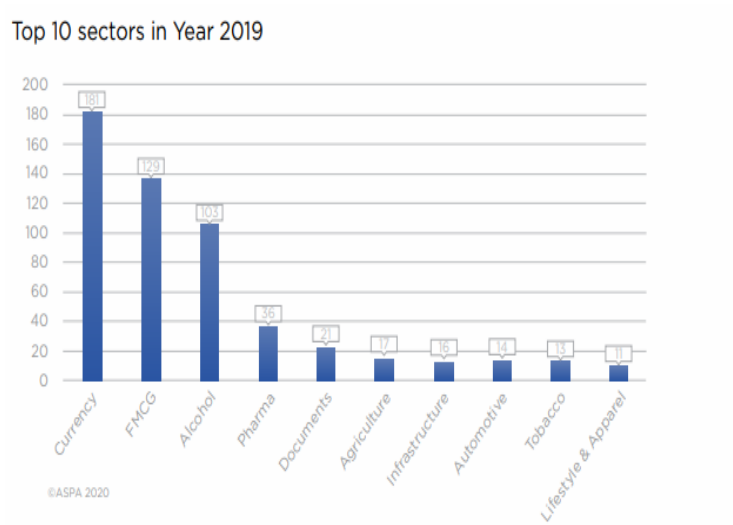
The graph below shows the top 10 sectors affected by counterfeiting in the years 2018 and 2019. Currency/ Alcohol/ FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods, such as cosmetics) have remained the top three sectors in the last two years (2018-2019) for counterfeiting.

Figure 3: Top 10 sectors affected in 2018



Source: ASPA,2020.

Figure 4: Top 10 sectors affected in 2019



Source: ASPA,2020.

Currency, FMCG, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, records, agriculture, infrastructure, automobile, tobacco, lifestyle, and apparel are the top 10 sectors with the highest number of recorded counterfeit cases. Alcohol, FMCG, currencies continue to be the top three sectors with the highest counterfeit incidents in the last two years. Among these, the most vulnerable sector is FMCG with a 63 percent increase between the years 2018 and 2019 (ASPA report,2020).

It is not possible to disregard the personal harm caused by fake beauty products. Under uncontrolled, unsanitary, and polluted conditions, fake cosmetics are commonly made. The effects of infected fakes can be catastrophic given the existence and intended uses of the product, with reports of rashes, allergies, and scarring are not unknown.

1.2 Comprehensive Background to the Research

The harm caused by counterfeit cosmetics is not just limited to health threats to the customers but it also hurts the brands by stealing valued brand trademarks, counterfeiters rob brand companies of their entitled income from decades of market analyses, consumer research and development, and billions of dollars spent on the finished product. counterfeit goods also hurt the economy as there are fewer taxes received from valued brands who are the copyright holders. I would like to shed light on how not only consumers but also brands and a nation's (India) economy are affected by counterfeit goods.

1.2.1 The health threats associated with counterfeit cosmetics

Fake cosmetics pose a major challenge to customers who buy them. Consumers of fake cosmetics can suffer serious health effects from the ingredients used in these products. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has noted that counterfeit cosmetics have been found to contain known carcinogens like arsenic, beryllium, and cadmium, as well as dangerous levels of aluminium and bacteria (Sachs, 2019). These ingredients have been associated with psoriasis in cosmetics, rashes, and diseases of the skin.

Additionally, counterfeit cosmetics are produced in unsanitary conditions and have even been contaminated by rat droppings and human urine. These dangerous ingredients often lead to serious health conditions, most frequent eye infections, allergic reactions, skin rashes, psoriasis, swollen lips, and chemical burns. With continued use, they might even cause long-term health problems like high blood pressure, infertility, and brain damage (Sachs, 2019).

The cosmetics brands follow certain guidelines laid down by regulatory bodies to ensure that safety and hygiene steps are taken and also include ingredients used to produce goods that let the customer know what they are using on their skin. However, counterfeiters are just concerned with profit when it comes to counterfeit cosmetics and doesn't bother to comply with basic safety and health laws and only try to gimmick the original product. And I feel that when it comes to the consistency of the product and ingredients used in it, this poses a lot of health risks.

1.2.2 Economic damage caused by counterfeit products

Counterfeiting is an immense global issue, affecting virtually every field of industry around the world. As a result of widespread counterfeiting in the world, India is no exception, suffering serious economic and health, and safety consequences.

A report by the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC), investigated the effect of the economic losses incurred by counterfeiting, piracy, and smuggling activities on the Indian economy. “The reduction of government revenue has a direct effect on expenditure on healthcare, such as health care, education, and public transport. This resource crunch is also hit by police and other security infrastructure, exacerbating the issue of inadequate enforcement compared to pirate, counterfeit and smuggling operations” (ICC report,2013).

Figure 5: estimated tax loss due to counterfeit products

Estimated Tax Loss to the Government**

Industry Sector	Direct Loss (Rs Crores)	Indirect Tax Loss (Rs Crores)	Tax Loss to the Exchequer (Rs Crores)
Auto Components	421	2,305	2,726
Alcohol	260	2,250	2,510
Computer Hardware	47	1,187	1,234
FMCG (Personal Goods)	867	3,779	4,646
FMCG (Packaged Food)	552	5,108	5,660
Mobile Phones	496	2,678	3,174
Tobacco	861	5,379	6,240
Estimated Annual Loss	3,504	22,686	26,190

Source: ICC,2013

Furthermore, by reducing the profitability of legitimate companies and the lay-offs, the demand for fakes has detrimental effects on the labour market. Also, workers employed by piracy and counterfeits live with poor working environments and lack of benefits (ICC report, 2013).

“The government has introduced initiatives to combat counterfeiting and piracy in India. Two big endeavours stand out, First, in India, the legal system is fairly well established. Second, the administration has taken steps to protect the health and safety of customers from harmful counterfeits through important intellectual initiatives. Despite these actions, a study by

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) shows that counterfeit, piracy and smuggling rates remain high” (ICC report, 2013).

In this research, I want to study the reasons why the demand for these counterfeit cosmetics is growing and the factors that drive customers to purchase fake cosmetics even after the health risks that these products pose.

2. Research Aims and Objectives

2.1 Research Problem Statement

In the preceding section, the author presented a quick description of the cosmetics industry and rising cosmetic market around the world, as well as focused on India and the issues that this industry entails, such as counterfeiting. The author also addressed the growing counterfeit market and the harm it does to customers as well as the economy and how it also affects the brands.

Bian and Moutinho (2011), in their research paper ‘Counterfeits and branded products: effects of counterfeit ownership’, states that Consumers have clear ideas about the possible effect of counterfeit products on the market and are mindful of the loss of income and reputation of the suppliers and the loss of employment in the country of origin. They also mentioned that the student consumers were aware of the illicit existence of counterfeit goods and related public welfare problems, and consumers were adequately aware of the ethical problems (Bian and Moutinho, 2011).

Counterfeit cosmetics not only hurt buyers but also damage the brands and economy. The use of fake cosmetic products poses health risks to customers using them, as discussed above. The effect of counterfeit products on an organization is profound and can cause long-lasting harm. Their prestige is also under attack, as buyers will associate the risk of purchasing a counterfeit to their brand. Counterfeit goods also contribute to tax losses which directly impact the economy of a nation.

2.2 Research Aim

The demand for counterfeit cosmetics is growing, regardless of the problems mentioned above, and customers are still driven to use counterfeit cosmetics. This research looks into the demand side of counterfeiting. One of the goals of this research is to look into the factors that lead people to buy counterfeit goods.

2.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are outlined as follows:

- To identify Indian consumers' motivation to purchase "counterfeit" cosmetic products in India.

- To determine if the customers feel it is ethical to buy these products.

Also following are the research questions:

1. What motivates Indian consumers to buy counterfeit cosmetic products in India?
2. To find out whether the consumers believe the purchase of the counterfeit cosmetics to be ethical?

2.4 Rational to the Study

Counterfeiting is a major global issue, impacting virtually every sector of the industry across the globe. India is no exception, facing significant economic and health, and safety implications as a result of widespread counterfeiting in the country.

As mentioned above it has been found that counterfeit cosmetics contain known carcinogens such as arsenic, beryllium, mica, and cadmium, as well as harmful amounts of aluminum and bacteria. Many of these mineral goods like blusher, eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara, lipstick, and foundation, contain mica, a glittery material used. The main source of this content today is India, which accounts for 60 percent of world production and has an industry that over the last two years is estimated to have increased by 8.5 percent. Concerns about the safety of the mica supply chains in the country are rising. Child labour in India's mica mining industry is prevalent, according to the Australian newspaper *The Age*, and 86 percent of the country's mica exports in 2010-2011 were unregulated (Child labour: mineral make-up boom raises fears over ethical extraction, 2014).

The year of last academic journal on consumers attitude towards counterfeit cosmetics product was done in 2017 “Consumer Attitude and Satisfaction with Counterfeit Cosmetic Products A Study in Himachal Pradesh” (Kumar, 2017) and a paper on consumers attitude towards counterfeit products was done in 2018 “ An Empirical study on consumer’s buying intentions of counterfeit products in India” (Verma, Kumar and S. Yadav, 2018).

There has been no study done particularly on factors that motivate consumers to buy counterfeit Cosmetic Products in Mumbai, India. There have been papers on Counterfeit luxury products or fashion products but not specifically focusing on cosmetics which prompts me to take up this topic to fill the gap. The research falls under the Global Marketing and Responsible

Business Management business disciplines because of the ethical implications of manufacturing counterfeit goods and purchasing the same products.

3. Literature Review

The key topics of this analysis are defined and substantiated by the critical examination of scholarly literature and theories in this literature review. The goal of the author is to discuss various studies on counterfeit goods and consumer intentions behind the purchase of counterfeit goods.

This chapter will provide a critical review of the available literature relating to previously established research objectives. The framework of this literature review will be formed by the following sections:

- Concept of counterfeiting.
- Consumers buying intentions of counterfeit products.
- Effect of counterfeit products brands.

3.1 Concept of Counterfeiting

The term “counterfeit” derives its meaning from the Latin word “contrefacere” which means to imitate, The term counterfeit has been given a variety of different names, such as a-knockoff, a pirated good, a copycat, a duplicate, an imitation, a reproduction, a fake, a look-alike and an unauthorized replica, etc (Kumar, 2017b). Counterfeiting can be understood as a fraudulent activity in which manufacturers apply a trademark to a product bearing a legitimate product's brand name or label without the knowledge of the registered brand owner.

Grossman & Sapiro (1988, cited in, Cademan and Halvarsson, 2012) defined Counterfeit products as identical or similar copies of trademarked goods that are offered in the marketplace to take advantage of the benefits generated by the specific branded products. Similarly, it is considered that counterfeit trade is a trade-in of goods which, whether due to their design, trademark, logo, or company name, bear, without authorization, a reference to a brand, manufacturer, or any organization which guarantees the quality or standard conformity of the goods in such a way that the counterfeit goods may potentially be confused with the goods which use the reference correctly (Kumar, 2017). These replicated products are produced to persuade the customer that they are similar to the original and to make customers believe they are purchasing the authentic and trademarked label.

In short, counterfeiting is a prudent technique to confuse consumers by illegally selling and trying to imitate highly exclusive labels and selling them at lower prices.

However, all counterfeit products are not made for convincing the buyer that he or she buys the original and trademarked brand i.e. there are two types of counterfeit products; deceptive and non-deceptive counterfeits (Cademan and Halvarsson, 2012).

The concept of Counterfeiting exists in two different ways, such as deceptive and non-deceptive counterfeiting, and clients can either purposely or unintentionally purchase counterfeit goods. Grossman and Shapiro (1988, cited in Kumar, 2017) suggested that at the time of the Purchasing consumers do not understand that certain forms of transactions are misleading counterfeiting when they buy a spurious product. However, when the customers buy counterfeit products with having knowledge of the same and they buy the products based on the type of quality of the product, price of the product and, the type of channel from where the product is purchased, such kind of transactions are known as non-deceptive counterfeiting.

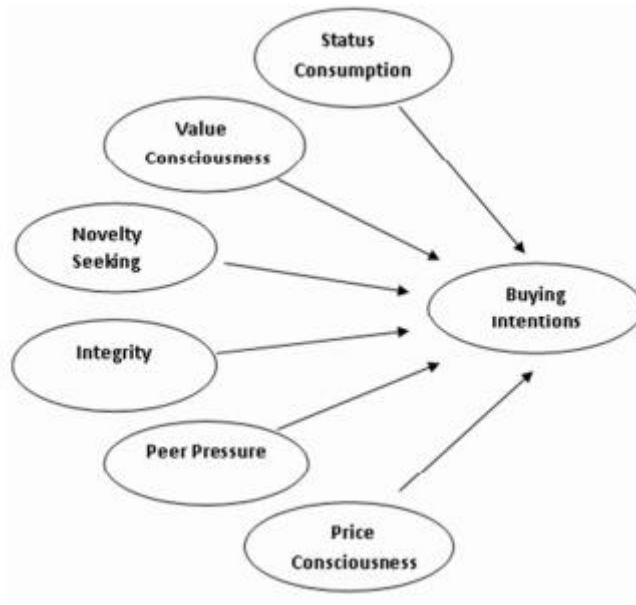
3.2 Consumers buying intentions of counterfeit products

The main goal of the study is to identify the key factors that motivate customers to purchase counterfeit cosmetic products.

Azen and Fishbein provide the key contribution to discussing people's actions through the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). It implies that the best predictors of actions are intentions. The studies on consumer's psychological determinants and consumers buying intentions are prominently affected by consumer's personality traits such as Integrity, Status consumption, Value consciousness, and materialism (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

In the consideration, assessment of a counterfeit product, the purchase intentions of customers play a critical role. Verma, Kumar, and Yadav (2018) in their study on “An Empirical study on consumers buying intentions of counterfeit products in India” explained the psychographic determinants and consumers' buying intentions with the help of a conceptual model.

Figure 6: Conceptual model for psychographic determinants and consumer's buying intentions



Source: (Verma, Kumar and Yadav, 2018).

The current approach to the conceptualization of various psychographic determinants shows the relation to consumers buying intentions.

- **Status consumption and consumers buying intention:**

Consumption of status is characterized as the extent to which the customer learns about the social status and benefits associated with different brands and buys them to retain a specific social status. The TRA clearly states that the role of personal and social factors is the purchasing intention of consumers (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

- **Value Consciousness:**

Value-conscious consumers are those consumers who are willing to buy products available at lower prices, subject to some quality constraints. More value-conscious consumers conduct price comparisons between different brands and are ready to sacrifice the quality to a certain level to buy products at lower prices. Consumers with high-value consciousness level preferred low price products over high price products (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

- **Novelty seeking:**

Novelty seeking consumers are those consumers who perceive shopping as enjoyment and always eager to bring change in the consumption behaviour through new collections and variations. The study conducted reveals that the thrust to seek new products is positively associated with the consumer's buying intentions. Further studies revealed that novelty-seeking has a positive influence on consumer's attitudes and buying intentions of purchasing counterfeit fashion products (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

- **Integrity:**

Integrity can be defined as an inner quality of being honest which is determined by an individual's ethical standards and his dutifulness to law. The literature suggests that integrity is found to have a significant relationship with consumers buying intentions of purchasing counterfeit products. Based on the findings in this literature states that the consumer with high integrity will see counterfeiting as illegal (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

- **Peer pressure:**

A peer group can be described as a social circle of individuals comprising peers, siblings, and acquaintances, most of the same age group, place, status, and interests. Social pressure leads individuals to follow laws and to violate rules as well. Furthermore, the study showed that customers were more likely to participate in illegal conduct of buying counterfeit goods in the presence of peer pressure (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

- **Price consciousness:**

Price-conscious consumers are those who are price-sensitive and know how much things cost and avoid buying expensive things. The buying behavior of price-conscious consumers is based on the degree to which the price of a product changes (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

According to the Lichtenstein *et al.*, (1993) price consciousness indicates the “degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying lower prices.” The low price of counterfeit products as compared to original things is the main factor that entices customers’ to purchase counterfeit goods (Kumar, 2017).

Price is probably one of the most significant determinants in explaining customers' purchasing intentions to buy counterfeit goods.

The research by Verma, Kumar, and Yadav (2018) on consumer buying intent shows the main psychographic determinants affecting consumer buying behavior with the help of a conceptual model. This model will help me build a conceptual framework that will also include the impact of counterfeiting on brands.

3.3 Effect of counterfeit products on consumers perception of Luxury brands

As mentioned in the previous section on the various factors that encourage customers to purchase counterfeit goods, this section will shed some light on how brands are affected by counterfeiting.

According to the literature counterfeits of luxury brands ruin the status of the genuine luxury brands and also contribute to the loss of exclusivity and uniqueness of these brands i.e. ruin the brand associations and perceived quality of luxury brands.

Luxury brand counterfeits ruin the status of legitimate luxury brands according to the literature and also lead to the loss of exclusivity and individuality of these brands, i.e. the ruin of brand relationships and the perceived quality of luxury brands (Cademan and Halvarsson, 2012).

Cademan and Halvarsson (2012) in their research stated that the understanding of counterfeit goods and the luxury brands' brand associations are quite the opposite. If counterfeit goods that have a negative reputation thrive on the market with the name of a luxury brand, this is likely to hurt a luxury brand's brand associations.

They further also discussed how Luxury brands' perceived image and brand associations are destroyed by Counterfeit are likely to have repercussions for the owners of legitimate brands. The associations that lead to the status of owning luxury brands, namely admiration, recognition, and acceptance rooted in the brand associations of luxury brands will probably be ruined and the status of owning luxury brands would not be greater than owning the counterfeit products of the brand (Cademan and Halvarsson, 2012). The analyses done by Cademan and Halvarsson (2012) confirmed that counterfeiting impacts the brand in two ways, that is, a negative perception of counterfeit products hurts the Brand associations of luxury brands and the negative perception of counterfeit goods has a negative influence on the perceived image of luxury brands.

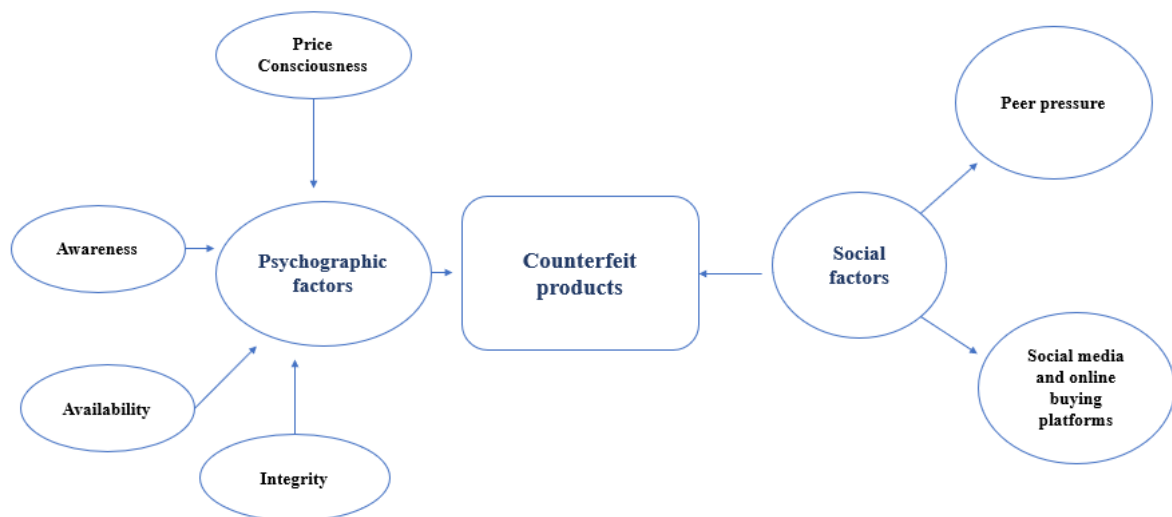
3.4 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is extracted from an exhaustive analysis of the literature. From the literature, the author has selected possible variables to be analysed as purchasing intentions that motivate customers to purchase counterfeit goods and how these counterfeit products negatively affect the brands.

Various factors in purchasing intentions, such as Status consumption, value consciousness, integrity, peer pressure, and price consumption as presented by the literature review, inspire buyers to purchase counterfeit goods, and these counterfeit products often have a detrimental effect on brands.

The author decided to combine the psychographic and social factor and show how both the factors influence the purchase of counterfeit products.

Figure 7: Psychographic and external factors motivating consumers to buy counterfeit cosmetics



Source: Author

The purpose of the study is to examine multiple factors that encourage customers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics. To do that, the study of the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews will support this conceptual construct.

The idea behind this conceptual framework is to explain how psychographic and social factors in consumer purchasing intentions drive customers to purchase counterfeit goods.

The researcher has selected various variables of consumer buying intentions to show how these motivate consumers to buy counterfeit goods and has also shed some light on how these counterfeit goods harm the brands.

The author has selected psychographic buying intentions from the literature to be extensively analysed during the data analysis section. These factors were chosen with this study's research goals in mind. The author also combined social factors which were established through the in-depth interviews taken.

To express the relationship between the ideas provided by the model, the arrows were used in the conceptual framework. The arrows shown between the psychographic and social buying intentions and the counterfeit products shows how consumers are motivated to buy these goods. The researcher expects the semi-structured interviews to collect adequate and appropriate data to address the research objectives of this dissertation.

4. Research Paradigm and Overall Approach

In this chapter, the author addresses the thought process that the author chooses to pursue to focus on the proposed thesis. It seeks to resolve the philosophical implications of the research approach and techniques to be applied in the analysis. The philosophical opinions are taken by the author help the analysis by the authors of the research objectives set and scheduled for a review into what is unknown.

4.1 Research Philosophy

The word research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the growth of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). It is essential for a researcher to choose the correct philosophy of study and method to arrive at valid conclusions that address the research goals.

All the decisions available to the researcher are provided by the 'research onion' developed by (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Peeling the 'research onion' layers helps the researcher to take four theories into account: positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The author has selected interpretivism as the chosen research philosophy of this thesis from examining the 'study onion's various philosophies.

It suggests that the research methods that follow the position that people's interpretation of reality is a social creation by human actors, and so the methods of natural science are distinctly excluded (Chowdhury, 2014).

Interpretative research aims at developing new, deeper understandings and perceptions of social worlds and contexts (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The interpretivist approach allows for versatility and interpretation. In short, interpretive philosophy gives the researcher a better chance to understand the study participants' attitudes and feelings, producing true and rich data (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2018).

The literature also explores the drawbacks of using the principle of interpretive philosophy. Cohen, Manion & Marison (2011, Cited in, Pham, 2018) argues that instead of generalizing these findings to other persons and other contexts, the interpretivists seek to achieve a deeper understanding and understanding of phenomena within their complexity of the context, so it appears to leave out a void in checking the validity and usefulness of study results through the

use of scientific procedures. Another criticism advanced by Mack (2010, Cited in, Pham, 2018) states that It appears to be subjective rather than empirical in its ontological view.

For this study, the author weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the philosophical choice and decided that the approach chosen would not affect the consistency and validity of the data collected. This thesis does not attempt at generalization and this research will focus on the definition of business performance concerning the constraint of subjectivity, so the use of a more analytical theory, such as positivism, could restrain the researcher throughout the process.

4.2 Research Approach

The author has decided to use the inductive approach over the deductive for the theoretical development. For social science research, the inductive approach is ideal, while the deductive approach is more suitable for natural science research. When applying an interpretivist theory, the inductive approach is often favored (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Psychologists and cognitive scientists have argued that the way people think is not sufficiently captured by deductive reasoning, and computer scientists have found that deductive logic does not understand how individuals respond to their environments. Science theorists also found that the scientific method is not sufficiently clarified by the deductive approach (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018).

However, Descartes and Hume believed that our senses are not reliable ways of attaining intelligence, so we need to rely on and deduce hypotheses from innate ideas or established theories. Induction was considered a way of advancing information that was inferior or invalid (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018).

For this analysis, the researcher objectively evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of the research method and concluded that the chosen strategy did not affect the consistency and validity of the collected data. The researcher is aware of the possibility of bias, but for each analysis that uses the inductive approach, this drawback is present.

4.3 Research Strategy

Since the researcher uses an interpretive philosophy, qualitative analysis is the research approach option that best suits this report. Because the analysis will come from words or photographs, their definitions will sometimes be ambiguous and responses to the interviewees will need to be explained (Saunders, 2019).

Creswell (2005, Cited in, Soiferman, 2010) defined qualitative research as research that is carried out in a natural environment. Also, the researcher becomes the instrument for the collection of data. It is up to the author to collect and interpret the words of the participants by searching for popular patterns, reflecting on the context of the participants, and explaining a method using both descriptive and persuasive language.

Truth is considered incomprehensible, fluid, and formed and affected by social experiences in the qualitative study. Qualitative researchers pursue the meaning from the comprehension of participants (Arghode, 2012). Qualitative research follows a different approach in investigating the research issue, it follows a rather distinct approach and assumes that truth cannot be understood as it is continuously influenced by social experiences. The interpretivist model, which is the foundation of qualitative analysis, believes in different truths and tries to understand knowledge building and not just whether or not knowledge is created (Arghode, 2012).

The key drawback of qualitative approaches to corpus analysis is that, with the same degree of assurance that quantitative analysis can, their results can not be applied to larger populations. This is because the study results are not tested to find out if they are statistically important or due to chance (Atieno, 2009).

The researcher has objectively evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of this study's research strategy and concluded that the chosen strategy would not affect the consistency and validity of the collected data. This thesis would benefit from the qualitative analysis to resolve the research objectives.

The author has decided, with the use of semi-structured interviews, to use a mono-method qualitative methodology to collect data. This style of interview helps the interviewer to discuss multiple subjects and also gives the participant the ability to speak freely (Saunders, 2019).

4.4 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling and sample size are of great importance, whether qualitative or quantitative, regardless of the analysis technique chosen for the study.

The researcher has chosen non-probability sampling over probability sampling. The researchers only select particular populations with non-probability sampling to explore a specific subject or when the total population is uncertain or inaccessible (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013).

The researcher can handpick the participants from a pool of options when using non-probability sampling, selecting those respondents that will allow the researcher to address the research goals (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

By using the non-probability sampling, the researcher chose individuals who deal with cosmetics such as young beauty bloggers, young influencers, or college students.

The sampling approach chosen for this analysis was purposeful sampling within non-probability sampling. Participants are recruited by purposeful sampling according to pre-selected parameters applicable to a specific research issue. Purposeful sampling is designed for in-depth analysis to provide information-rich situations. This is because respondents are those who have the rank or expertise needed, or are considered to have special knowledge to provide the information researchers are searching for (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013).

One of the limitations of purposeful sampling is that it does not allow generalization and is subjective (Taherdoost, 2016).

A typical range for determining sample size is typically between 8 and 15 participants with regard to the number of participants in qualitative studies, although it can differ widely within and outside this range (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013). For case research, Creswell (2007, Cited in, Lopez and Whitehead, 2013) recommends 3-5 respondents and 15-20 for grounded theory study.

The researcher has chosen to interview 7 people who will be identified by a purposeful sampling methodology that will include participants that are closely linked to cosmetics, such as young beauty bloggers, vloggers, influencers, and college students.

4.5 Time Horizon

The author has a preference for either a longitudinal or a cross-sectional time horizon for study. Owing to time limitations/constraints, the author chose a cross-sectional time horizon. The researcher understands that cross-sectional analysis does not provide a continuous perspective of the phenomenon, but rather a "snapshot" of it, but it is the most suitable method for this research, taking into account the time constraints (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Because most cross-sectional surveys are conducted at a single point in time by a single respondent, this type of study is believed to be particularly susceptible to possible bias in the Common Method Variance (CMV) (Rindfleisch *et al.*, 2008).

The researcher has objectively evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of this study's time period and concluded that the chosen approach would not impact the quality of the data collected. The researcher is aware of the risks of bias that this approach may cause, but all studies that use a cross-sectional time horizon approach present this drawback.

4.6 Method of Data collection - Semi-structured Interviews

The essence of qualitative data varies from non-numerical or unquantified data, such as textual data, a shortlist of answers, such as verbal data, to more nuanced data, such as transcripts or graphics (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

The essence of the data collected in this study as part of the semi-structured interviews would include documenting the answers in the form of verbal data. The verbal information will then be transcribed in textual form and the textual data will also be generated by the notes taken in the study diary during the interview by the researcher. The questions will be open, and jargon-free to involve the respondents, and would not be questions that can be easily addressed with yes or no.

The semi-structured interview is common because it is versatile, open, intelligible, and, more importantly, capable of revealing important aspects of human and organizational actions that are often concealed. It is also the most effective and easy way to gather information (Qu and Dumay, 2011).

The kind of questions to be answered during the interviews would be, Narrative or Open questions and probing questions.

4.7 Collection Primary data:

4.7.1 Data collection Process and sources of data:

The author describes the methods of the data collection process for semi-structured interviews in this section.

The selected participants, young beauty bloggers, Makeup artists, artists, and college students, were contacted via email or social media network that is Instagram containing the instructions to the plain language statement asking them if they have used counterfeit cosmetics and will be sent an informed consent form describing their position in the study and once i receive the confirmation. A suitable audio online session was arranged to conduct the interview.

According to Saunders et al. (2019), qualitative data can be of three types: Verbal, Textual and Visual data. The researcher collected verbal data from the interviews since all the interviews will be converted into transcriptions.

By using interviews as instructed by the integrated essence of the research issue, the exploratory data to be obtained from respondents will be carried out. On the other hand, the use of theme-based narration or open-ended questions and the chance to depart from the prepared questionnaire might demonstrate new ways of seeing and interpreting the issues at hand.

The researcher was mindful of what the respondents say and adaptive to allow the discussions to go to the topics and issues that are relevant to them to ensure the quality of the exploratory data gathered. Despite the versatility, if the discussion loses emphasis on the real topic, I took the lead in aligning their thoughts to return to the study theme. Where required, I was a sensitive listener asking sub-questions. An audio recording method and note-taking in the study diary during the interview captured the specifics of the interview.

Promptly after the interview, a list was made of the observations and experiences that I considered relevant before the recording was transcribed. This is accompanied by the recording of the interview, which forms part of the process of data processing.

Taking into account the time limitations of this research, the author agreed, with the use of semi-structured interviews, to use a mono-method qualitative approach for data collection. This style of interview helps the interviewer to discuss multiple subjects and also gives the participant the ability to speak freely (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

4.7.2 Access and ethical issues:

The author adhered to the General Data Protection Regulation at all times. I made sure that consent was taken prior to the interview and questioners were sent to the participants well in advance and then the interview was scheduled as per the participants convenience. The author made sure that the interviews were conducted on time and the participants convenience and time was my priority. The participants were informed before the interview that their interview would be recorded and their consent was taken before proceeding further.

The interviewees were told that the conversation would be kept private. I made certain that the information acquired was kept safe, and that no personal information other than age, gender, and profession was requested during the interview, as the author was solely interested in the participants' thoughts and knowledge on the subject.

The author made sure that the recordings and the transcripts were stored securely complying to the ethical aspects.

4.7.3 Approach to data analysis:

I decided to use the template analysis (TA) methodology for data analysis throughout my qualitative research. Template analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that aims to strike a balance between flexibility and structure when dealing with textual data. It's a method in which the researcher uses the literature review and some primary data to create codes. The researcher will then apply the codes to the remainder of the data collected, revising and refining them as necessary (King and Brooks, 2016).

The methodology relies on the creation of a coding template, which is usually based on a subset of data and then applied to new data, changed, and refined. It does not prescribe a predefined sequence of coding levels in advance, unlike some other thematic approaches to data coding. Rather, it encourages the analyst to expand on themes where the most data is available (Brooks *et al.*, 2015)

The researcher will have to select material from the interviews that can be coded as of the codes during the analysis. After completing the coding procedure, the researcher must interpret the data before beginning to write the findings.

5. Presentation and discussion of findings:

The findings of the primary data acquired and analysed according to the study methodology are presented and discussed in this chapter. Here the author presents the result, firstly, along with two themes/constructs that emerged from the key topics discussed during the interview. The first theme refers to psychological factors/ personal factors which includes price consciousness, Novelty seeking, ethical perception, availability and awareness. The second dimension involves social factors that are related to peer pressure, social status and type of purchase. We discuss the past experience and consumers perception and awareness towards usage of counterfeit cosmetics.

There were 7 interviews conducted with counterfeit buyer or professionals who used cosmetics who are living in Mumbai, people who uses cosmetics frequently and people whose profession involved cosmetics and are aware of counterfeit cosmetics. All the consumers had experienced purchasing counterfeit cosmetics. In-depth interviews were conducted with open-ended questions and probing questions were asked to clarify and extract more detailed answers from participants to the question.

Table 1: overview of respondent's:

Respondent	Occupation	Gender	Age
1	Makeup artist	Male	34
2	Model	Female	28
3	Student/artist	Female	24
4	Financial analyst	Female	25
5	Accounting associate and a makeup model	Female	22
6	Makeup artist	Female	23
7	Makeup artist	Female	27

People who bought and used cosmetics regularly were the author's target audience. So, the author enlisted the help of beauty artists, models, and young millennials who use cosmetics regularly, as well as people who work in the makeup industry, to ensure that everyone was aware of the phrase counterfeit and had come across it.

Respondent 1: Respondent one is a Mumbai-based celebrity makeup artist who has been in the industry for over a decade. He does not use cosmetics on himself, but he does use them on his clientele. He has never used counterfeit cosmetics himself, but he has seen numerous other professionals do it on their clients in his line of work. He claims that in his line of work, people are expected to use well-known brands, but that most people choose knockoffs because they are less expensive and more readily available.

Respondent 2: The second respondent is a professional model who has also competed in Miss India. Her job necessitates her to wear cosmetics, but she doesn't use them very often and only buys them when she needs them. When asked about fake cosmetics, she said that she had encountered them frequently and that they are readily available in the city in small beauty shops.

Respondent 3: She is a student and an artist who performs Indian classical dance styles on stage and occasionally wears cosmetics. When she goes out for street shopping in Mumbai, she frequently comes across imitation products, and she has also witnessed students in college using counterfeit cosmetics, which she could tell from the package that it was a knockoff. And she usually orders her cosmetics online from a particular brand that she trusts.

Respondent 4: She works as a financial analyst and frequently wears cosmetics, particularly before the lock-down in India. When asked if she has ever come across fake cosmetics, she related a personal experience in which she used a fake blush that she thought was an actual brand, and she also stated that fake cosmetics are fairly easy to get by in Mumbai, especially in small shops and it attracts a lot of customers.

Respondent 5: Respondent five is a young lady who works as a financial associate and is also a make-up model. She uses cosmetics frequently because she has worked with many makeup artists, and she has also shared her experience with using counterfeit cosmetic products and how these fake products are easily available in Mumbai in any shop.

Respondent 6: She is young makeup artist and a fashion stylist and often uses cosmetics on daily basis and has come across fake products and has also used a fake cosmetic in one of her shoots as it was easily available.

Respondent 7: She is a makeup artist who has worked in the cosmetics industry for almost five years and has personally used counterfeit cosmetics. She also provides her expertise and insights into consumer behaviour when it comes to cosmetics purchases.

5.1 Findings from data collected:

The codes and themes that were used throughout the data analysis are listed below. these codes and themes were extracted from the objectives and theories from literature review and are theory driven.

To begin, the author inquired about how frequently respondents used and acquired counterfeit cosmetics daily, as well as whether they were aware of the term. All of the respondents had used cosmetics at some point, with some using it frequently and others having to use cosmetics as part of their job.

“So am a makeup artist from Mumbai, India. And am into this business for almost 10 years now like almost a decade now and yes, I do use products like cosmetics, I don’t use it mostly for me but I use it for my clients” (Respondent 1, Makeup artist).

Respondent 2 is a model didn’t buy makeup products often but purchased it as and when required and has come across counterfeit cosmetic but never really used it as she was aware that it a fake product. *“I actually don't buy cosmetics. Very Often I buy cosmetics as and when my products get over so on an average, you could say that I buy cosmetics, I don't really use foundations or concealers on a day-to-day basis, as you say things like lipsticks things like foundation concealers, those would probably be bought” (Respondent 2).*

“I think I've come across, counterfeit cosmetics A lot of times, especially in small towns, if you notice if you go to all of these stores that sell makeup goods, they usually end up selling counterfeit cosmetics, and I think the most heavily sold counterfeit cosmetic would be that of Huda Beauty, the eyeshadow palette you find it almost everywhere, and you know it's fake. So that's, yeah, I see come across is part of the cosmetics, more than once” (Respondent 2, Model).

Respondent 5 uses cosmetics on day-to-day basis and has also used counterfeit cosmetic products when she was in college. *“I used cosmetics product very often, I am a makeup model*

as well, so I have to work with a lot of makeup artists and its quite frequent so yeah I use it often” (Respondent 5, Accounting associate and makeup model).

Even respondent 7 has shared her experience of purchasing a counterfeit cosmetic product in the past. “I think when I bought this product, I wasn’t really educated about what that product is. So, I think not knowing about it caused me to buy that product. And I didn't know about the effects, or the causes that it might have on my body or skin. Second thing, it’s very cheap to buy and very affordable and they come in very attractive colours and like they have a lot of variety. I think these are the reasons that made me buy those products” (Respondent 7, Makeup artist).

Once it was established that all respondents used cosmetics and are aware about the counterfeit cosmetics further questions were asked based on their experience and knowledge on counterfeit cosmetic products. After the interviews were done codes and themes were taken out from the interview and literature.

Table 2: coding system and themes for data analysis

Extract	Code	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying product to retain a specific social status. • Role of peer groups. • Impact of social media. • Consumer purchase the product knowingly or got deceived. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer pressure/ Social status • Social media platforms • Type of purchase (deceptive/ non-deceptive). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social factor / external attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer’s willingness to buy products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychographic factors

<p>available at lower prices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers who perceive shopping as enjoyment and seeks variety in products. • Ethical standards • Buying products that are easily available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity/ ethical perception • Availability • Knowledge/ Awareness 	
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5.1.1 Theme 1: Psychographic Factors:

The goal of this study was to figure out what drives Mumbai customers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics. To investigate these elements, researchers developed a research-based model based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to gain a better understanding of the psychological aspects that influence customers' buying decisions. Additionally, a conceptual framework was built with the help of this model, in which these psychological components were integrated with external factors, and the author built a framework, which was also analysed. Overall, the outcomes of this study show that all of the characteristics were validated and were consistent with the findings of prior fake product investigations.

Azen and Fishbein provide the key contribution to discussing people's actions through the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). It implies that the best predictors of actions are intentions. The studies on consumer's psychological determinants and consumers buying intentions are prominently affected by consumer's personality traits such as Integrity, Status consumption, Value consciousness, and materialism (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

The literature review and the in-depth interviews helped us identify factors under psychographic factors that are Price consciousness, Integrity/ ethical perception, availability and knowledge/awareness.

Price consciousness:

According to the Lichtenstein *et al.*, (1993) price consciousness indicates the “degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying lower prices.” The low price of counterfeit products as compared to original things is the main factor that entices customers’ to purchase counterfeit goods (Kumar, 2017). As discussed in literature review and the in-depth interview reveal that price plays a major role why consumers go for counterfeit cosmetics.

Price sensitivity influences people's intents to buy genuine products, as Huang, Lee, and Hsun Ho (2004, p.336) found, where people with higher price sensitivity demonstrated opportunistic behaviour toward counterfeits. Individuals with lower income will have increased buy intents as a result of the reduced pricing (Hussain, Kofinas and Win, 2017).

To start assessing the topic, the researcher wanted to establish what the participants believed played a major role in consumers purchasing these counterfeit cosmetics and how much they believed price played a role in the purchase.

All the participants felt that price played the most important role when it comes to purchasing counterfeit cosmetics and reaffirmed that price played a major role. Price appears to be the most crucial factor in purchasing counterfeit cosmetics.

Respondent 1 who has been working in the Bollywood industry for a decade now when asked about it has given a statement about the makeup artists he has worked and seen working over the years, “*So ,it’s you know what happens here people like some people in the makeup industry are like expected to use renowned brands and good products and few people want to buy these branded products to show their clients that they use good products but what happens is clients are not aware exactly and they are not an expert that by looking at the product they realise that it’s not a genuine product and that’s why there are many people who buy these products because they have budget issues and because branded products are very expensive and it’s much easier to buy*” (Respondent 1, makeup artist).

Respondent 5 who is a makeup model when asked about counterfeit cosmetics has shared her experience of using counterfeit product in her college days and mentioned how price played a role for her to purchase a counterfeit product.

“I used to when I was in college, I might have used it once or twice because of various factors such as one of the major factors is price. And then, you can't really make up the difference between the original and thing because marketing of it is very similar to the original brand. You really make out the difference between original and counterfeit products so I used to use that when I was in college, maybe, but right now I don't prefer it” (Respondent 5, makeup model).

Respondent 7 who is a makeup artist also shared her experience of using counterfeit cosmetics and she mentioned how price played a role in the purchase. *“I think when I bought this product, I wasn't really educated about what that product is. So, I think not knowing about it caused me to buy that product. And I didn't know about the effects, or the causes that it might have on my body or skin. Second thing, it's very cheap to buy and very affordable and they come in very attractive colours and like they have a lot of variety. I think these are the reasons that made me buy those products”* (Respondent 7, makeup artist).

“I think the main reason is a lot of big brands is advertising and publicity which everyone wants to use right. I know it's a very expensive brand so there are brands you get the same thing for cheaper and people are able to afford it and able to satisfy by using that brand at the cost of damaging their skin actually” (Respondent 4, financial analyst).

According to a survey Harvey and Walls (2013) of 120 Hong Kong students and 60 Las Vegas students, the higher the price of the branded product, the greater is desire to buy counterfeit goods(Viot, Le Roux and Kremer, 2014).

Price consciousness, which is consistent with earlier findings, is something that encourages customers to buy phony cosmetics, as evidenced by respondents' responses that price is the most important element.

Availability:

While price has been the leading factor and a consistent answer amongst respondents contributing to consumers purchasing fake products. The extant literature seems to overestimate its influence and overlooked another determinant that is availability. However,

while pricing is essential, it is not the only factor in deciding whether or not to buy a fake product. Other considerations that consumers examine include the availability and diversity of counterfeits.

As one of the respondents mentioned how a particular brand was not available in India and fake copies of it were being sold. *“I remember this one time I was really surprised to see again, like I mentioned previously, Huda Beauty eyeshadow palette. And because I knew for a fact that back then it wasn't available in the Indian market I remember going up on Google and checking if it was being sold”* (Respondent 2, Model).

When asked how easily these counterfeit cosmetics were available and whether this plays a role in consumers preferring counterfeit cosmetics over the original product, all of the respondents agreed that they are very easily available in the market in Mumbai and play a significant role in the purchase of counterfeit cosmetic.

Respondent 2 believes that with social media fake products have become more easily accessible. *“It's definitely become easier to buy counterfeit cosmetics and get tricked into buying fake cosmetics with increasing social buying platforms because it's so openly, easily accessible and everybody thinks that okay you know what, this is their online I can just buy it”* (Respondent 2, model).

“I think in Mumbai these are very easily available especially in the small shops where you get it for very cheaper price, it attracts a lot of customers in Mumbai and people don't realise that it's actually a fake one and not the original one” (Respondent 4, Financial analyst).

Respondent 5 feels that availability is the third most important factor followed by price and lack of knowledge that motivates consumers to purchase fake cosmetics. *“Third thing I feel availability also, it's like easily available and you can buy it from anywhere and everywhere. If I compare it with international brands like kylie, Huda They're not easily available in Indian markets. So, we need to. You can't even make a difference between an original product or a fake product and you even get scammed. It might be original or it may not be an original product”* (Respondent 5, makeup model).

In short, the majority of respondents believed that availability was one of the elements that prompted consumers to buy fraudulent products. Consumers choose these products because they are readily available in the market.

The respondents' comments also revealed that, in comparison to the original brand, availability alone did not play a factor in buying decisions; rather, the varieties that were supplied were far more appealing and accessible in a wider range of alternatives.

“They come in very attractive colours and like they have a lot of variety. I think these are the reasons that made me buy those products” (Respondent 7, Makeup artist).

“Again, they are easily available in different colours which the Indian brands don’t have” (Respondent 7, Makeup artist).

“Another reason that I feel, people tend to buy these products is because the kinds of shades that it offers it's an actual replication of what original parameters right. So, when you get the exact same shades when you get the exact same looking thing that you don't necessarily find in other affordable Indian brands, young women tend to buy counterfeit makeup products.” (Respondent 2, Model).

Therefore, many consumers are allured by the variety and packaging of the counterfeit product and also the fact that these products are so easily and readily available in Mumbai.

Awareness:

All the respondents have some level of knowledge and are aware of counterfeit cosmetics and few have even used these counterfeit cosmetics. The authors aim was to know how much does awareness or knowledge about the product plays a role in consumer purchase intention of counterfeit cosmetics.

One of the factors which was consistent in all respondent’s answer other than price was the level of awareness or lack of knowledge that played a role in consumers purchasing fake products.

All the respondents felt that lack of knowledge was the second most important factor after price that influenced consumers to buy counterfeit cosmetics. Most of them felt that consumers while purchasing the product didn’t know that it was a fake product and were deceived into buying it.

Respondent 7 a make-up artist herself shares her experience of buying a counterfeit cosmetic due to lack of education before. She explained how she bought a false product because she didn't know much about it and didn't know what effects or causes it might have on her skin.

Respondent 2 Miss India Goa, strongly feels that if the women are educated about the harms of using counterfeit cosmetics, they would not choose buying them.

*“I think, at least in the lower tier cities, it is definitely the **lack of knowledge on differentiating fake and genuine products**, is why people buy counterfeit cosmetics and I also think young women, or women in general don't really have the knowledge of how harmful it is for your skin and your body and how toxic, it can be. And I think if all of these women are educated and given enough information about how counterfeit makeup products really ruins the quality of your skin. 95% of them would stop buying these products. I think education is definitely key and is definitely lacking” (Respondent 2, Model).*

Whereas, only respondent 3 felt that it was not entirely lack of knowledge that motivated consumers to buy counterfeit goods as she personally feels with the era of internet it's easier to gain knowledge and that even people who are familiar with the product nonetheless buy it for the novelty factor, and price plays a role here as well since the products are so inexpensive that buyers do not want to spend more money on the original product, which is considerably more expensive.

“Lack of knowledge is definitely not the right thing to say because considering the fact that you have everything in your fingers you can always google and go check it out? I think most people are aware that these are counterfeit and go for it because they want to try and because they know that it's not going to be much of a difference in the first place, and they don't want to spend that extra zero, like 3300, an extra zero by extra 100 to buy something more expensive, which is still going to last a few months. so, I feel about it, it's very subjective to each and every consumer that you see” (Respondent 3, artist).

The responses of the other individuals were quite consistent, implying that knowledge plays a very important role in purchasing of counterfeit cosmetics. Most of them felt that it was the lack of knowledge about the counterfeit cosmetics is why consumers are mostly deceived into buying it.

Integrity/ ethical perception:

Vitell and Muncy (2005) suggested that ethical behaviour is a valuable notion in society, and most people are taught to act ethically because ethical people are rewarded and unethical people are publicly denounced and chastised (Tang, Tian and Zaichkowsky, 2014).

The literature suggests that integrity is found to have a significant relationship with consumers buying intentions of purchasing counterfeit products. Based on the findings in this literature states that the consumer with high integrity will see counterfeiting as illegal (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

The researcher aimed to understand the view of respondents whether they considered it ethical in consumer point of view.

Majority of the respondent felt that it is unethical to buy these fake products but also felt that consumers who purchased it unknowingly or the ones who can't afford original brands would not be considered unethical. But personally, most of the respondents felt that it is unethical to buy counterfeits.

But respondent 5 believed that it is marketers or sellers' responsibility to inform consumers whether it a genuine product or not. *"I feel that when we talk about ethics for the marketer is educating the people is informing consumers that this is a counterfeit product and this is not an original copy when I asked them whether this is a fake product before buying. Obviously, we tend to confirm whether this is an original brand, or an original copy and if the sales man honestly says that this is a counterfeit product. And still the consumer decides to buy it then as it turns on consumer and I think in that way it would be ethical but if the market is saying that no this is an original product instead and I think that becomes very unethical because it's kind of misleading"* (Respondent 5, Makeup model).

Respondent 7 thinks that if a consumer can't afford the original product and chooses counterfeit product over it then its ethical in consumer point of view and feels that the way these are marketed is unethical. *"It is subjective, because for someone who cannot afford genuine brands, for them it is definitely ethical to buy, to be able to own a fake one. But one thing surely unethical about these products is that these counterfeit products is the manner in which they are introduced, and I think I perceive it to be fraudulent"* (Respondent 7, Makeup artist).

Further when the respondents were asked whether they think if people understood that or knew that it is unethical to buy fake products, most of them felt that most of the consumers are not aware that its unethical to buy fake products.

Some respondents even said that even if the consumers know its unethical to buy them, the consumers who can't afford to buy original expensive brands would still choose to buy counterfeits which are much cheaper.

5.1.2 Theme 2: Social factors/ external factors

In this section the author aims to discuss the external or the social factors that emerged from interview data that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics.

Various external factors like role of social media, peer pressure, social media buying platforms emerged from the interview.

4 respondents shared their experience where they used a counterfeit cosmetic, out of which 2 were aware of the fact that it was a counterfeit cosmetic and other 2 were deceived into buying this product.

“I think once unknowingly I had purchased a blush which I assume was of a specific brand, but I don't think it was the original one because I had some effect after using it” (Respondent 4, Financial Analyst).

“I think when I bought this product, I wasn't really educated about what that product is. So, I think not knowing about it caused me to buy that product. And I didn't know about the effects, or the causes that it might have on my body or skin. Second thing, it's very cheap to buy and very affordable and they come in very attractive colours and like they have a lot of variety. I think these are the reasons that made me buy those products” (Respondent 7, Makeup artist).

“Yes. So, this one time when I was having a shoot I was out of a lipstick, like I had to get a purple lipstick and I couldn't find any on the spot so I had to go with a counterfeit lipstick and yeah, I have bought it” (Respondent 6, makeup artist).

The respondents' answers revealed that either they were deceived into buying fake product and realised the product was fake after they purchased it or used it and others were who bought it because it was cheap or readily available.

Peer pressure/ Social status:

All the respondents had similar views when asked about how much peer groups plays a role in purchase decision of counterfeit cosmetic and all believed that peer groups also influenced the consumers to go for fake cosmetics.

Respondent 2 had strong view on peer groups and how consumers use fake products to maintain a status quo and show off. *“I think it has to do with the fact that not just the Indian society but every society in general functions heavily on status quo, and the fact that young women out there, look at all of these influencers and bloggers, you know, using all of these cool brands that are marketed and advocated for in terms of their quality in terms of the status quo in terms of a luxury brand, and young women in India just generally want to roll around with these brands in their pockets, even when they're fully aware that it's a counterfeit product but just the fact that they may have a chance to show off in front of someone or at least imaginarily feel that you know they are using this branded product is probably the reason why people still continue to buy counterfeit product”* (Respondent 2, Model).

Respondent 4 strongly believes that social pressure motivates consumers to purchase counterfeit goods. *“I think the majority of it is because of the social pressure, when people see somebody else use the same product you just want to be in the same link no, that is why people feel pressured to go out and buy these or compromise on something to buy something else that is why these fake cosmetics play a big role and online shopping”* (Respondent 4, Financial Analyst).

Respondent 5 as she shares her personal experience also thinks that peer groups play a key role and if one consumer sees other using a counterfeit, they get motivated to try it as well. *“Yes, obviously I feel peer pressure also, also plays a major role. So, if my friend, one of my friends is using counterfeit products and she really loves it and she recommended me that this is the product I'm using, so mostly teenagers do that word-of-mouth marketing. Usually, teenagers suggest each other that this is a product I'm using and you should use it and sometimes in pressure also, people tend to buy it because I have done it even, I suggest my friends that this is the product I'm currently using it and its good and all so they consider that she is saying so I might as well try”* (Respondent 5, Makeup model).

The responses revealed that peer groups, particularly among young girls, had a significant role in attempting counterfeit cosmetics, as well as how word of mouth influenced customers to try

counterfeit items. Peers, according to all of the respondents, play a substantial part in their decision to buy counterfeit goods. They are enticed to buy and utilise counterfeit products by their peers' use of counterfeits.

Social Media platforms:

People no longer need to go out on the streets to buy items because of the rise of social media. Everything is accessible with a simple thumb scroll. The role of social media as a factor can't be ruled out, and it hasn't been considered in the literature, despite the rise in social media usage and buying platforms. With the increased reliance on online purchasing, the author intended to establish and thought it was vital to investigate the relation between social media and consumers' buying decisions of owning a counterfeit product.

Most of the respondents feel that with the increase in social media buying platforms it has become easier for consumers to access these counterfeit cosmetics and they also believe that social media influencers also play a role in influencing consumers purchase decisions.

“So, what happens is people see these products online or on websites or apps, you know first copy products. What happens is these products are priced low and they go for it, they buy it and then they realise that this is not a real one, so knowledge is very important” (Respondent 1, Makeup artist).

“It's definitely become easier to buy counterfeit cosmetics and get tricked into buying fake cosmetics with increasing social buying platforms because it's so openly, easily accessible and everybody thinks that okay you know what, this is their online I can just buy it” (Respondent 2, Model).

Respondent 5 shares her personal experience on how she was deceived into buying a counterfeit cosmetic product online. *“Yes, I think that even social media plays a major role E commerce, social media when it comes to marketing of these products. First of all, I believe that these products are locally manufactured, sometimes marketers market these products stating that these are imported products. I have heard about this a lot. Whenever I go to any shop in Mumbai locally, so they're always marketing it as this is an imported product. So first of all, we don't have any means to verify that it's a imported product. And according to me I think they're locally manufactured products. And in social media also they market it as imported and we don't have any means to verify that.so social media does play a major role in fact once even I was scammed. So, I bought this kylie Cosmetics one lipstick from one of the e*

commerce websites and I thought that it would be authentic because I was paying a good price for it, but later on when I discussed it with my friends. So, I realised that this is not the real brand, and I was actually scammed. So, e-commerce is also scamming people when it comes to these cosmetic products” (Respondent 5, Makeup model).

It was also clear from the comments that the social media shopping platform not only made it simpler for users to buy counterfeit cosmetics but also influenced them to do so. According to the respondents, influencers and beauty bloggers play a role in persuading young girls to test new products online, and some influencers even promote these products.

5.2 Conclusion:

The findings of the primary data obtained from semi-structured interviews are presented and discussed in this chapter. The purpose of the interview was to learn more about the variables that lead people to buy counterfeit cosmetics.

The findings were analysed in light of the research objectives, and observations were made based on the information gathered. The majority of the data corroborated the literature reported in this study, although some novel factors appeared that were not previously identified.

The findings related to the factors motivating consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics is deeply dependent on the price of the product offered in the market. The finding also reaffirmed that More value-conscious consumers conduct price comparisons between different brands and are ready to sacrifice the quality to a certain level to buy products at lower prices. Consumers with high-value consciousness level preferred low price products over high price products (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

The findings also reaffirmed that Lichtenstein et al., (1993) price consciousness indicates the “degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying lower prices.” The low price of counterfeit products as compared to original things is the main factor that entices customers to purchase counterfeit goods (Kumar, 2017).

Thus, indicating that price plays a key role in consumers choosing fake cosmetic over original product.

The research finding has also stressed and gives new insight on how lack of knowledge and availability as an important factor followed by price that influences the consumers purchase

decision, which has not been mentioned or discussed in literature review and has emerged in the interview taken.

The findings also reaffirms that Consumption of status is characterized as the extent to which the customer learns about the social status and benefits associated with different brands and buys them to retain a specific social status. The TRA clearly states that the role of personal and social factors is the purchasing intention of consumers (Verma, Kumar and S. K. Yadav, 2018).

The results while analysing consumers buying intentions indicate that status consumption serves as a motivator for customers to purchase counterfeit products and the purchasing intentions to purchase counterfeit products are correlated with the social status provided by counterfeit products rather than practical benefits.

Factors such as the role of social media surfaced from the interview, which was not explored in the literature analysis. The findings of the data study also show how social media has made it simpler to buy counterfeit cosmetics and how it has influenced consumers. Social media as a factor was overlooked in the literatures and was usually not seen as an essential component, but the interviews and responses show that social media is now playing a big role in influencing customers' perceptions and making it easier to buy counterfeit cosmetics.

To sum up, the majority of the data reported here corroborated what had previously been published in the literature on the subject.

6. Concluding thoughts on factors that motivates consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics:

The findings, as well as the restrictions that emerged during the research process, were summarised in this concluding chapter. The researcher has also offered suggestions for future research as well as advice that other researchers may consider while studying the factors that influence the buying of counterfeit cosmetics.

6.1 Summary of findings:

The objective of this research was to study the factors that motivate consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics. The findings from primary data have shown that there are three main factors that play a key role in purchase intention of counterfeit cosmetics; Price, availability and knowledge.

When it comes to purchasing counterfeit cosmetics, all of the respondents said that price is the most essential factor. When asked what inspires consumers to buy counterfeit cosmetics, the responses were constant, and respondents stated that it is because counterfeit cosmetics are cheaper than the actual product and how easily these products are available in the market.

Few respondents also shared their experience on using counterfeit cosmetic and the reason why they purchased it. Most of them were deceived into buying these fake products as they didn't know that it was a counterfeit and also how price attracted them. One of the respondents shared that during her college days price is what attracted her to buy a counterfeit cosmetic.

The primary data also gave some new insights on the factors that aren't mentioned in the literature review, like Most of the respondents shared how variety and choice availability in counterfeit that are not usually available in original product also attracts a lot of consumers. *"Another reason that I feel, people tend to buy these products is because the kinds of shades that it offers it's an actual replication of what original parameters right. So, when you get the exact same shades when you get the exact same looking thing that you don't necessarily find in other affordable Indian brands, young women tend to buy counterfeit makeup products"* (Respondent 2, Model).

The findings also reveal how increase in social media platforms and how social groups, influencers also motivate consumers to choose fake product. The findings also reveal that most

of the consumers lack knowledge about the product being fake and are mostly deceived into buying it or are scammed online.

But there are also consumers who purchase these products knowing they are fake and price plays the most important role and how easily they are available in the market, and how social media is developing as a big player in influencing customers, as well as making it easier for consumers to purchase fake cosmetic items with only one tap of a finger.

6.2 Implication of the findings:

The conclusions produced from the primary data revealed some intriguing factors that were not previously examined in the literature.

The literature didn't consider how lack of knowledge played a role in consumers purchasing counterfeit cosmetics. Most of the respondents had consistent answer and felt that even though consumers were aware of these products it was the lack of knowledge that made consumers choose fake products.

Social media as a factor was also not explored in the extant literature, it highlighted how social media has made it even easier to purchase these products and how even social media is influencing consumers.

The findings predominantly indicated that all the respondents were aware about the term counterfeit cosmetics and have come across these products, reaffirms that price played a major role in motivating consumers to purchase counterfeit cosmetics.

From the findings it is possible to conclude that various psychographic and external factors motivate consumers to purchase fake products out of which, price, availability and peer pressure plays a major role.

6.3 Contributions and Limitations of the Research:

The key value of this study is that it may serve as a reference for original brand producers as they develop and re-establish their strategy to ensure that consumers do not prefer counterfeit products over genuine products.

One of the respondents also mentions how word of mouth also plays a role in other consumers purchasing counterfeit cosmetics. *“So, if my friend, one of my friends is using counterfeit products and she really loves it and she recommended me that this is the product I'm using, so*

mostly teenagers do that word-of-mouth marketing. Usually, teenagers suggest each other that this is a product I'm using and you should use it” (Respondent 5, Makeup model).

People look at what peers are purchasing and utilizing before making a purchase. They also seek advice from others. As a result, brand marketers should focus on creating relationships with their consumers, which will aid in word-of-mouth marketing. It is also proposed that businesses should improve their point-of-purchase management to increase sales through external influence.

The researcher acknowledges that this study was conducted with a very limited sample size and that no generalizations can be made. Nonetheless, the author thinks that this research will lead to a better understanding of consumers' purchase intentions for counterfeit cosmetics so that businesses can target them and raise awareness.

There are some drawbacks to this study. First and foremost, the study is based on data collected from a limited group of participants (seven respondents). For a more in-depth investigation of participants' perceptions, a high sample size is recommended.

Furthermore, the author had a small window of time to gather data. Despite the limitations of this study, the results show that the findings provide a sound platform for future research.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research:

While acknowledging the research limitations, the findings suggest that the study's aims were largely met.

Implementing a mixed research method and integrating qualitative and quantitative data into future studies would be beneficial. The qualitative method would emphasize the participants' perspectives, while the quantitative method will indeed allow the results to be generalized.

Future research could focus on consumers' perceptions of ethics surrounding the purchase of counterfeit cosmetics products. Other variables such as age and education could be used as a factor in researching the factors that influence people's attitudes toward counterfeit cosmetics.

Future research should look into the function of social media and online buying platforms in growing counterfeit cosmetics purchases and sales. Because social media has been identified as one of the elements affecting customers, future studies can focus on this component and the role that influencers play in encouraging consumers to buy counterfeit cosmetics.

Also, this research concentrated on the demand side of the industry and looked into customer perceptions; however, future research might look into the supply side of the industry as well.

6.5 Final conclusion and reflection:

counterfeiting is a massive global problem that affects practically every industry on the planet. India, like the rest of the world, is facing major economic, health, and safety ramifications as a result of widespread counterfeiting. It is not only harmful to the brand or the economy, but it also poses a significant risk to consumers who are unable to distinguish between an original and a counterfeit product, or who use it without understanding how dangerous it is to them.

This study's findings are supposed to benefit both academics and practitioners. As previously said, counterfeit cosmetics pose a significant risk to both consumers and brands, and the problem is growing. The author expects that this study can aid brands in better understanding consumer needs, as well as improved marketing and awareness of their products.

In a summary, this study paves the way for future researchers and urges for more related research in this subject, as well as deeper exploration of both the consumer and supplier sides of the market.

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Appendix 1: Transcripts of the interview

Interview 1

Interviewer:

Hi how are you?

Respondent:

I am good, Thank you.

Interviewer:

Firstly, thank you for volunteering for this interview and your responses will remain confidential, and I hope you're okay with me recording it.

Respondent:

Yes sure.

Interviewer:

How often do you use cosmetic products?

Respondent:

I actually don't buy cosmetics. Very Often I buy cosmetics as and when my products get over so on an average, you could say that I buy cosmetics, I don't really use foundations or concealers on a day-to-day basis, as you say things like lipsticks things like foundation concealers, those would probably be bought.

Interviewer:

Rank the following an order of importance the quantity, quality, price of brand name of the product while you purchase cosmetics.

Respondent:

I think the first one would be quality, next one would be price, third would be quantity, and fourth would be the brand name of the product.

Interviewer:

Are you aware of the term counterfeit cosmetics and what do you understand by this term?

Respondent:

Yes, am aware of term counterfeit cosmetics, and what the term means. I think counterfeit cosmetics are basically cosmetics of lower quality cheaper materials. Products that are basically labelled and planted as famous products, established companies, and they basically are replicating the same kind of branding the same type of logos and things like that but with very minor differences so that can easily pass off as an original product, but in reality, are counterfeit.

Interviewer:

Have you ever come across counterfeit cosmetics?

Respondent:

I think I've come across, counterfeit cosmetics A lot of times, especially in small towns, if you notice if you go to all of these stores that sell makeup goods, they usually end up selling counterfeit cosmetics, and I think the most heavily sold counterfeit cosmetic would be that of Huda Beauty, the eyeshadow palette you find it almost everywhere, and you know it's fake. So that's, yeah, I see come across is part of the cosmetics, more than once.

Interviewer:

Have you bought counterfeit cosmetics knowing that it was a fake product or unknowingly?

Respondent:

I don't think I have put counterfeit cosmetics, any, any time actually. I remember this one time I was really surprised to see again, like I mentioned previously, Huda Beauty eyeshadow palette. And because I knew for a fact that back then it wasn't available in the Indian market I remember going up on Google and checking if it was being sold. After, after finding out that it wasn't being sold. I did not buy the eyeshadow palette.

Interviewer:

Why do you think people still choose counterfeit products instead of an affordable Indian brand which are manufactured following all the safety norms?

Respondent:

I think it has to do with the fact that not just the Indian society but every society in general functions heavily on status quo, and the fact that young women out there, look at all of these influencers and bloggers, you know, using all of these cool brands that are marketed and advocated for in terms of their quality in terms of the status quo in terms of a luxury brand, and young women in India just generally want to roll around with these brands in their pockets, even when they're fully aware that it's a counterfeit product but just the fact that they may have a chance to show off in front of someone or at least imaginarily feel that you know they are using this branded product is probably the reason why people still continue to buy counterfeit products. Another reason that I feel, people tend to buy these products is because the kinds of shades that it offers it's an actual replication of what original parameters right. So, when you get the exact same shades when you get the exact same looking thing that you don't necessarily find in other affordable Indian brands, young women tend to buy counterfeit makeup products. I think these are the two major factors why people still continue to buy counterfeit products instead of affordable Indian brand.

Interviewer:

Do you think it has become easier to buy counterfeit cosmetics or get tricked into buying these counterfeit cosmetics Because of the increasing social media buying?

Respondent:

It's definitely become easier to buy counterfeit cosmetics and get tricked into buying fake cosmetics with increasing social buying platforms because it's so openly, easily accessible and everybody thinks that okay you know what, this is their online I can just buy it. So, yes.

Interviewer:

Do you think it's the lack of knowledge about differentiating the fake and original products, what makes people buy these products or they end up buying these products?

Respondent:

I think, at least in the lower tier cities, it is definitely the lack of knowledge on differentiating fake and genuine products, is why people buy counterfeit cosmetics and I also think young women, or women in general don't really have the knowledge of how harmful it is for your skin and your body and how toxic, it can be. And I think if all of these women are educated and given enough information about how counterfeit makeup products really ruins the quality of your skin. 95% of them would stop buying these products. I think education is definitely key and is definitely lacking.

Interviewer:

Thank you so much for giving me your time and take care, stay safe.

Respondent:

It's my pleasure.

Appendix 2: Transcript of the interview

Interview 2

Interviewer:

Hi how are you.

Respondent:

I'm good thank you.

Interviewer:

Firstly, thank you for volunteering for this interview and your responses will remain confidential, and I hope you're okay with me recording it.

Respondent:

Sure, sure no problem.

Interviewer:

Okay so, starting with the first question How frequently do you use cosmetics?

Respondent:

I used cosmetics product very often, I am a makeup model as well, so I have to work with a lot of makeup artists and its quite frequent so yeah, I use it often.

Interviewer:

Are you aware of the term counterfeit cosmetics and what do you understand by this term?

Respondent:

Yes, I have heard about this term counterfeit cosmetic and I understand that its basically a first copy of original brand and sometimes it a its basically fake its like first copy of brands.

Interviewer:

Have you ever come across counterfeit cosmetics?

Respondent:

Very often, in fact in Mumbai every shop every shop has a counterfeit product. I think it's very cheap as well so basically shopkeeper prefers to keep counterfeit products in their shop.

Interviewer:

Ok and have you bought counterfeit cosmetic knowing that it was fake or have you ever come across it unknowingly?

Respondent:

I used to when I was in college, I might have used it once or twice because of various factors such as one of the major factors is price. And then, you can't really make up the difference between the original and thing because marketing of it is very similar to the original brand. You really make out the difference between original and counterfeit products so I used to use that when I was in college, maybe, but right now I don't prefer it.

Interviewer:

And why do you think people choose this counterfeit product over the affordable Indian brands, which are manufactured with all the safety knowns?

Respondent:

I think lack of education about the products may be a major factor. There is no one to be there's no one to educate consumers on that there are other Indian brands of cheaper price range which are manufactured with keeping all the norms in mind, lack of education is one of the major signs of secondary price prices also plays a major role. And most of the people, for example, our college days and prefer mostly counterfeit products because it is affordable. Comes in a lower price range. Second factor would be price and third thing I feel availability also, it's like easily available and you can buy it from anywhere and everywhere. If I compare it with international brands like kylie, Huda They're not easily available in Indian markets. So, we need to. You can't even make a difference between an original product or a fake product and you even get scammed. It might be original or it may not be an original product.

Interviewer:

How much do you think social factor plays a role like social maybe peer pressure?

Respondent:

Yes, obviously I feel peer pressure also, also plays a major role. So, if my friend, one of my friends is using counterfeit products and she really loves it and she recommended me that this is the product I'm using, so mostly teenagers do that word-of-mouth marketing. Usually, teenagers suggest each other that this is a product I'm using and you should use it and sometimes in pressure also, people tend to buy it because I have done it even, I suggest my friends that this is the product I'm currently using it and its good and all so they consider that she is saying so I might as well try.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think it has become easier to buy this counterfeit cosmetics, with increasing social buying platforms?

Respondent:

Yes, yes, I think that even social media plays a major role E commerce, social media when it comes to marketing of these products. First of all, I believe that these products are locally manufactured, sometimes marketers market these products stating that these are imported products. I have heard about this a lot. Whenever I go to any shop in Mumbai locally, so they're always marketing it as this is an imported product. So first of all, we don't have any means to verify that it's an imported product. And according to me I think they're locally manufactured products. And in social media also they market it as imported and we don't have any means to verify that. so social media does play a major role in fact once even I was scammed. So, I bought this kylie Cosmetics one lipstick from one of the e commerce websites and I thought that it would be authentic because I was paying a good price for it, but later on when I discussed it with my friends. So, I realised that this is not the real brand, and I was actually scammed. So, e commerce is also scamming people when it comes to these cosmetic products.

Interviewer:

still did you end up buying it or using that product after knowing that it was not a real product.

Respondent:

I did not. I did not buy it again. But then that I realised that it is not an original product so I did not prefer buying it again. I mean obviously I was very hesitant buying cosmetics especially international brands online. So, I usually prefer it to buy offline from malls. I did not buy it again.

Interviewer:

Do you think price plays a major role in why people choose these products?

Respondent:

Yes, I feel that price plays a major motivating factor for people, especially when it comes to lower middle class, middle class people. I believe that they prefer cosmetics, everybody nowadays loves makeup. They want to you know look presentable. And obviously, good makeup brands come with a price so not everybody can afford it. Actually, I believe that prices play a very major role, and that's why I feel that counterfeit cosmetics are surviving in the market because of price.

Interviewer:

And do you think it's ethical to buy these counterfeits if you see from consumer perspective.

Respondent:

If so, I feel that when we talk about about ethics for the marketere is educating the people is informing consumers that this is a counterfeit product and this is not an original copy when I asked them whether this is a before buying. Obviously, we tend to confirm whether this is an original brand, or an original copy and if the sales man honestly says that this is a counterfeit product. And still the consumer decides to buy it then as it turns on consumer and I think in that way it would be ethical but if the market is saying that no this is an original product instead and I think that becomes very unethical because it's kind of misleading.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's about it. Thank you so much for giving me your time I will send you the recording.

Respondent:

Thank you so much. It was my pleasure and lovely talking to you.

Interviewer:

Thank you.