

THE ROLE OF HOPE AND ATTITUDE IN LUXURY COUNTERFEIT PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the emotion hope for social status and attitude toward counterfeit goods as predictors of consumers' intention to purchase counterfeit products..

Design/methodology/approach – We conduct an experiment with 45 undergraduates (51% female) from different universities, which design was a 2 (hope for social status; hopeful vs non-hope) x 2 (attitude towards counterfeit goods; positive vs negative) full factorial, between-subjects.

Findings – Results confirmed that people felt hopeful after manipulation; however, future steps of this investigation should consider the use of another instrument of manipulation even more effective. However, respondents also pointed out they felt happiness, which makes us believe that it is important to use an instrument of manipulation even more effectively to guarantee the achievement of the real manipulation, without the interference from extraneous variables.

Theoretical/methodological contributions – Although originated in categories such as apparel and luxury accessories, counterfeiting now affects a wide range of industries, representing a major economic threat. This great amount of counterfeit trade worldwide is shocking, and leads us to argue: what are the factors that influence the intention to purchase these products, especially regarding the consumption of luxury counterfeit brands? We believe that emotion may represent an important role in people's intention to purchase counterfeit goods. Besides, the attitude towards counterfeit goods may also imply variations of intention to purchase, playing a moderator role. The inclusion of emotion in consumer behavior studies presents a significant opportunity to develop theory and practice in this area of study.

Originality/value – The explanations of whether emotions may represent antecedents of the purchasing of counterfeits are quite limited, and the understanding of the motivations behind the purchase of such products remains undefined in the marketing literature. Analysis of the study shows that hope and attitude can simultaneously offer opportunities for consumer behavior research.

Keywords: Hope. Attitude. Counterfeit.

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1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotions are central to human experience, and they are somehow involved in every venture that people engage in, encouraging or inhibiting specific actions. When a consumer chooses a product based on experience, she tends to emphasize emotional aspects considering subjective benefits; these same emotional aspects may also affect the choice between similar alternatives in terms of utility (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Even consumption activities that provide objective and tangible benefits, such as eating or dressing, may also contain a subjective, hedonic, or symbolic component (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Understanding the nature of emotional reactions allows the comprehension of the process of brand/product choices, product or service usage, and other aspects of consumer behavior.

Emotions are intense mental states of readiness that arise from appraisals one makes for something of relevance to one's well-being, they are complex reactions to how we think we are surviving, flourishing, and achieving what we wish for ourselves; they are often expressed physically,

and may result in specific actions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer, 1999; Lazarus, 1991). They are often categorized in valence: i) positive emotions are associated with the realization of reaching a goal, a particular beneficial one, such as joy, hope, and happiness; ii) negative emotions result from obstacles or failures to achieve a goal, such as anger, guilt, and fear. Moral emotions are those that go beyond the direct interests of the self, such as pride, shame, guilt, and gratitude (Haidt, 2003).

Interest in emotions in scientific marketing research started in the 1980s, after the publication of seminal articles in the field (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Ahtola, 1985). Since then, the role of emotions in the discipline has gained notoriety by stimulating new research on the subject (Richins, 1997; Bagozzi, 1997; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). While emotions originate from the individual context of interpretations (Frijda, 1987; Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1991), they also play a role in motivating behavior, and influencing individuals to take new decisions (Holbrook, Hirschman 1982; Ahtola, 1985).

2.1 Hope for Social Status

One important motivational emotion is hope. It occurs when people are expecting something good, welcome, and positive, beyond the control of the one who hopes (Pieper, 1994). It is present in our everyday life: we hope to look attractive, be part of a group, be safe or have a balanced life. Hope has also cognitive components since it involves a combination of belief, which has cognitive purport, and desire, which does not (Day, 1991). It is a positive motivational state based on the success of energy directed to the motivational force (agency) and routes (pathways) needed to achieve the desired goal, which may be the cure of a disease, graduating from university, or buying a luxury handbag. Hope is the sum of this motivational force (agency) and routes (pathways) used in order to achieve the goal (Snyder, 2000). A goal is a final state that the individual seeks to achieve, and must have enough value to occupy the conscious thought of the individual, enhancing the motivation to achieve it.

A number of fields have studied hope under different perspectives. In psychology, hope is the sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes, so people produce one or multiple routes towards their goals, or even alternate routes when an obstacle is identified (Snyder, 2000). In marketing, hope is a future-oriented positive emotion that varies as a function of the degree of yearning for an uncertain, yet possible outcome and consumers experience hope on three levels: they hope for objects, for outcomes and for selves (MacInnis & Chun, 2006). A consumer's hope for objects is related to product acquisition, such as they hope to have luxury clothes, fancy shoes, or fashionable sunglasses. When consumers hope for outcomes, they are trying to address current concerns, like hoping for material success, feeling more confident, or losing weight. When they hope for selves, they have more macro-level goals, such as being successful, admired, or acquiring social status.

Hope for recognition and status prompts consumption of high-end cars, luxury homes and appliances, luxury travel, and designer clothing (MacInnis & Chun, 2006). Thus, one reason to explain counterfeit consumption could be the search for social status expressed in the consumption of products, especially in the low-income population, as money may be a barrier to obtaining original products. Status-seeking consumers are more likely to have a positive attitude towards counterfeits of luxury brands, due to incentives such as lower prices and product attributes and benefits that are similar to the original ones (Phau & Teah, 2009). Consumers' desire for counterfeit luxury brands may be based on social motivations (i.e., to express themselves and/or to fit in social norms), so such products may serve a social-adjustive function when individuals consume to gain approval in social

situations, or a value-expressive function, helping them to express their beliefs, attitudes, and values (Wilcox et al., 2009).

Accordingly, status-seeking is present in everyday life and people from different social classes usually find in goods and services pathways to reach or keep power and status. There is a conspicuous consumption of goods and services as a means to relate individuals to specific social classes, leading the upper classes to use certain objects to differentiate themselves from the other classes. At the time the lower social classes start symbolically using these objects, the upper social classes tend to abandon them and begin to seek new products to symbolize their status (Veblen, 2007). As a Brazilian example, the consumption patterns in the domain of Funk Ostentação, a type of music in which the MC's (master of ceremony) exhibit luxury products such as expensive cars and jewelry, are financially impossible to be imitated by their fans, who mostly come from low-income population. Thus, such fans use counterfeit products to achieve social status (Abdalla & Zambaldi, 2015).

In sum, as people have hope for divergent goals they can hope, for example, for social status, and express it through luxurious brands consumption. In the case of low-income consumers, when they hope for the social status they may face the economic barrier of not affording original brands, and in such a situation, one alternative that emerges is buying a counterfeit product. Thus, when a high hope individual faces an obstacle (such as an economic barrier) to reach a goal (such as social status), she is more likely to consider alternative options (such as buying a counterfeit luxury product for a cheaper price) to reach the goal, than a low hope individual. In such a case, hope for social status represents an antecedent for the consumer's intention to purchase.

2.2 Attitude towards counterfeit goods

People usually have opinions about different issues and those are expressed when they are acting specific behaviors. It is called attitude, a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007). Attitude is highly correlated with one's intention, which in turn is a reasonable predictor of behavior, expressed in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985, 1991). The TPB is an expectancy-value model, which states that behavioral intention (the cognitive representation of the individual's motivation to enact the behavior in question) leads to human behavior, which is in turn explained by one's attitude (the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior), subjective norm (the individual's perceived social/peer pressure in undertaking the behavior) and perceived behavior control (the individual's perception of the ease or difficulty in enacting the behavior) (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2014).

Some studies explored relationship between attitudes toward counterfeit goods (Strehlau, Vils, Pereira, Polisel & Campanario, 2014), (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007), (Kapferer & Michaut, 2014). Others used scales to evaluate Counterfeit Proneness (Sharma & Chan, 2011), which is also associated with the attitude toward the purchase and consumption of counterfeit products. Antecedents of consumer attitudes were investigated by Matos, Ituassu & Rossi (2007), which used two conceptual models, one proposed and tested by Huang et al. (2004), who considered price-consciousness, price-quality inference, and risk averseness; and the other proposed by Ang et al., (2001) who considered social factors (i.e. informative susceptibility and normative susceptibility) and personality factors (i.e. value consciousness, integrity, and personal gratification).

The attitude seems to have an important role, as previously investigated with cancer patients, whose oncologists overwhelmingly feel that a positive attitude influences patients' illness experiences and their view of their doctors, and 88% report that they usually make an effort to

encourage patients to hold optimistic attitudes (Good, Good, Schaffeer & Lind, 1990). However, some studies in consumer research did not find evidence for the direct influence of attitude on purchase intention (Matos et al., 2007); this may be evidence of the mediator role of attitude: other key constructs affect attitudes, which in turn affect behavioral intentions. Thus, the proposal of our investigation is to consider attitude as a moderator of the main effect, which is the hope for social status over the intention to purchase counterfeit goods. Whether consumers' have a positive attitude toward counterfeit products, they would have more willingness to consume it, than whether they had a negative attitude. As such, we propose that:

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

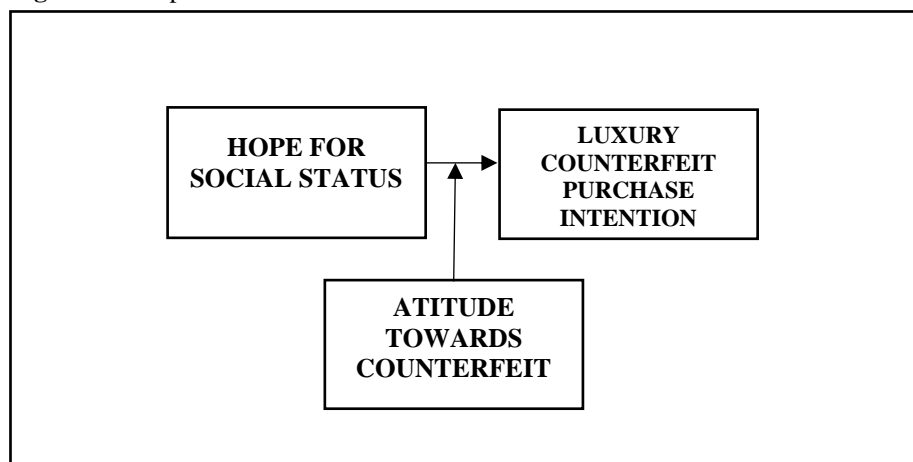
H1a: Individuals' attitude toward counterfeit products moderates the relationship between hope for social status and intention to purchase counterfeit goods.

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants and Design

We conduct a test among 45 undergraduates (51% female) from different universities, which voluntarily participated of the study. Figure 1 introduce the proposed model of our study, which design was a 2 (hope for social status; hopeful vs non-hope) x 2 (attitude towards counterfeit goods; positive vs negative) full factorial, between-subjects. As cited, we considered attitude as a moderator in our model, thus we used a six-item attitude scale (positive attitude toward buying counterfeit by economic benefits) and a five-item attitude scale (positive attitude toward buying counterfeit by hedonic benefits) proposed by Yoo & Lee (2009). However, during the face and content validation all invited researchers indicated the substitution of the hedonic benefits scale, suggesting a three-item attitude scale validated by Souza, Sousa, Ferreira & Mota (2015) to analyze the effect of this variable.

Figure 1 – Proposed Model



The research design proposed consider a positive relationship of hope for social status over luxury counterfeit purchase intention, considering attitude toward counterfeit products moderating this main relationship.

3.2 Procedure

Participants received an online questionnaire in two situations (manipulation or control conditions). First, participants answered demographic questions about sex, age, civil status, and income. The next section presents a video, which was different in each situation (while one stimulus hope into participants, the other was about a neutral topic). Then, participants started to answer the questions of the scale, composed of three dimensions (counterfeit goods intention to purchase, positive attitude towards counterfeit by hedonic and economic benefits). In the next section, participants answered two items of manipulation check regarding whether they would write about the main purpose of the study and what they had felt when viewing the video.

3.3 Hope Manipulation

The videos (manipulation and control) were carefully chosen. A thorough search on the internet was necessary in order to find important characteristics of hope in the perfect choice, thus high motivational force and the expectancy to perform outcomes were the main characteristics found in the stimuli video. As cited, hope is a positive motivational state based on the success of energy directed to the motivational force and routes needed to achieve the desired goal (Snyder, 2000). Control condition participants watched nature scenes; criteria to choose video considered that the video should not have any exciting soundtrack or any image remembering hope. Scenes of growing plants, waterfalls, ice melting, and flowers were predominant.

3.4 Dependent Measures

We assessed participants' inferences about their intention to purchase counterfeit goods using the five-item scale (purchase intention of counterfeits) proposed by Yoo & Lee (2009). This scale is composed of the item "How much would you like to purchase x counterfeits in the future?" Where different categories such as handbags, designer shoes, apparel, sunglasses, and jewelry substituted "x".

3.5 Manipulation Check

After answering the questionnaire, participants faced two more items, one open-ended question "According to your observations, what do you think is this study about?", and one multiple-choice question "What did you feel when you see the video?". Participants were allowed to point out more than one option among six items (happiness, anger, hope, guilt, sadness, and regret).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The answers to the manipulation check confirmed that people felt hopeful after viewing the stimuli video (78% pointed out hope), this guarantees the activation of hope in people. In other words, the experiment could manipulate the independent variable, hope for social status. However,

respondents also pointed out they felt happiness, which makes us believe that it is important to use an instrument of manipulation even more effectively to guarantee the achievement of the real manipulation, without the interference from extraneous variables.

Our research may have some limitations regarding the sample amount. The total number of respondents does not allow rich statistical analysis of data; by the way, we designed a pretest so far, our main interest here is to affirm the correct application of the experiment and find mistakes and improvements for the next steps of our empirical investigation.

We considered one moderator in our model, attitude towards counterfeit. Further investigations should make an effort to include other variables in order to build a robust model, we suggest researchers would embrace moderators as past behavior, considering good or bad experiences with counterfeit products may represent willingness or aversion of the intention to purchase counterfeit products. Social evaluation should be included too, once reactions and statements of observers may encourage or discourage the intention to purchase counterfeit.

It is also important to investigate other emotions as direct influencers of intention to purchase these products. We designed an experiment considering hope for social status as our main emotion, however, future research may attempt to use fear, happiness, guilt, shame, pride, or nostalgia. They could observe variations of importance between emotions to see what is the most influencer of intentions to purchase counterfeit, and they may observe differences between positive and negative emotions and their impact on the intention to purchase.

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