ABSTRACT

The luxury brands counterfeits are gaining widespread popularity due to spike in consumer demand which has led to alarming expansion in different kinds of goods being infringed, among which counterfeits of designer label clothing needs attention.The main objective of the study is to examine Bandwagon, Snob, and Veblen effects in the background of counterfeit clothes among female students.Apart from this, the study analyses the role of self-concept on three above mentioned consumer behaviours, mediated by various personality traits such as: Consumer Susceptibility to Normative Influence, Consumer's Need for Uniqueness, and Status Consumption.In order to answer these research questions, a quantitative research is conducted.The study uses non-probability sampling technique; more specifically, snowball sampling technique to recruit study participants. A sample of 200 females students was drawn from both university types (public/private), thus resulting in a total sample size of 400.A survey questionnaire was developed to gather responses from 400 female university students, who were purchasers or non-purchasers of counterfeit clothes.For data analysis, the descriptive as well as inferential statistics were performed. The cross tabulations as well asgraphical representations were widely used within the study. For empirical analysis of the data, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used.The findings indicate that female students engage in volitional purchase of counterfeit clothes in Lahore. These consumers are fully aware of places of purchase; use price and non-price cues to detect counterfeit clothes; purchase them for personal, family use, and for gift to others; and, use them for dressing at home and university/office. The results reveal thatbuyers of counterfeit goods tend to be young, are unmarried/married, and possess tertiary education, have low personal income, low/high household income and expenditure, have many siblings, and with no children.In addition, the result portrays that public universities' female students are purchasers of counterfeit clothes. Whereas, private universities students are non-purchasers of counterfeit clothes. Based on consumer perceptions, the findings suggest that public university students have more negative perceptions regarding counterfeit clothes; perceive higher economic benefits; and, are less sensitive to brand names during counterfeit clothes' consumption and purchases than private universities' students. Furthermore,the findings revealed partial existence of Bandwagon effect, complete presence of Snob effect, and complete absence of Veblen effect in case of counterfeit clothes.Moreover, the

findings indicate that consumers with interpersonal self-orientation tend to associate themselves with others; as the result, they are more susceptible to normative pressure, and consume popular and well-known counterfeit branded clothes thus leading to Bandwagon consumption. Whereas, consumers with independent self-orientation tend to disassociate themselves from others and satisfy their need for uniqueness by consuming new, unique, un-popular, and less-known brands thus leading to Snob consumption of counterfeit clothes. Furthermore, conspicuous brand's clothing elevates individual's social status but consumers who face income constraints might not be able to afford exorbitant prices charged by authentic manufacturers. Therefore, such consumers may resort to counterfeits of designer clothes in order to gain prestige thus leading to Veblen consumption of counterfeit clothes.Overall, the findings imply that female students consume counterfeits of high fashion brands to construct their desired social image. In this way, those who choose deception as convenient option; canbenefit from the prestige associated with genuine clothing brands, at a fraction of price. Thus, consumption of counterfeits of high clothing brands may serve females by communicating who they are and by winning the acceptance of society.In order to combat widespread replication of high fashion clothing brands, this research will help brand managers to better understand counterfeit buyers; their personality traits, and different types of counterfeit consumption behaviors. Furthermore, thiswill assist brand managers to develop sound understanding of market segmentation, and formulate and adopt distinct marketing strategies and anti-counterfeiting measures against luxury clothes' counterfeiting, and seek novel solutions to satisfy consumer's need.