



PD – 10

Young consumers and their attitudes towards counterfeits; Evidence from a Developing Country

S.A. Buddhika

Department of Marketing, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka.

The most valuable assets that many companies possess are intangible ones, out of which Brand being the prominent and most important. A thriving brand occupies a unique and prominent position in consumers' mind accompanied by high level of loyalty and trust among consumers and channel members. Counterfeiting is a significant and growing problem worldwide, especially in less developed countries because it attacks one of the most valuable assets of an international marketing company. A counterfeit brand refers to an identical copy made to deceive consumers into believing that it is the genuine article. According to a study done in 2004, 7% of the products were counterfeits, valued around \$512 billion.

The main objective of the study was to determine the nature and the extent of counterfeiting and also to determine consumer attitude towards purchasing the counterfeits. The study was carried out as a survey using a structured questionnaire, with 15 scale type questions. A convenient sample of 600 was selected representing the 3 districts of the southern province and a pre screening was done to select respondents in the age group 17 to 25. 66 questionnaires were removed during the analysis due to incompatibility. It was found that consumers buy counterfeits due to various reasons and magnitude of these reasons are contextual. Further, the study found out that the subjective norm, or an influence from the reference group has a great tendency in shaping counterfeit buying behavior. At the same time research found a negative relationship between perceived risk and attitude towards buying counterfeits. This study could not find any significant relationship with integrity and behavior of buying counterfeits.

Keywords: Young Consumers, Brands, Attitudes, Counterfeits