Consumer buying behavior towards counterfeit brands in Sri Lanka: The role of social and personality factors

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Abstract

Globally prevalent, counterfeit goods provide serious difficulties for governments, companies, and consumers alike. This study looks at the variables affecting Sri Lankan consumers' decisions about buying fake footwear. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theoretical framework that the paper employs to explain how customers' intentions and behaviors are shaped by their cognitive and emotional processes. A convenience sample of 474 Sri Lankan respondents who answered a structured questionnaire is used in this article. To evaluate the hypotheses and the mediation effects, Hayes's PROCESS macro and structural equation modeling were used to analyze the data. The findings demonstrated that moral duty had a large negative impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit shoes, whereas attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control had significant favorable impacts. The study also discovered that while perceived behavioral control had a direct impact on behavior, attitude, subjective norm, and moral responsibility had mediated their impacts on behavior via intention. The ramifications of these results for theory, practice, and policy are also covered in this work. It makes recommendations for future study approaches, such as examining the significance of other psychological aspects including self-identification, social identity, and perceived danger as well as contrasting consumer attitudes about counterfeit shoes across various geographies, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic classes.

Keywords: Counterfeit shoes, Consumer behavior, Theory of Planned Behavior, Social factors, Personality Factors, Purchase intention

1 Introduction

Counterfeit products are unauthorised copies of genuine trademarks that deceive consumers and infringe against the owners' legal rights. Global in reach, counterfeiting poses serious hazards to the economy, society, and culture as well as affecting a variety of organizations and sectors (Guin et al., 2014). The estimated value of counterfeit goods in 2016 was $509 billion, or 3.3% of global trade, according to the OECD (2019). Counterfeit goods damage the reputation, image, and customer loyalty of the legitimate brand owners in addition to resulting in financial losses. Furthermore, utilizing phony products may be dangerous for consumers' health and safety, especially when it comes to food, cosmetics, medications, and auto parts. Counterfeit products can affect government revenue because they evade taxes and levies, undermine the integrity of the legal system, and endanger the protection of intellectual property rights.

The estimated value of Sri Lanka's counterfeit industry, which affects a wide range of sectors including electronics, household goods, luxury goods, and automotive components, is Rs. 88 billion, according to the Sri Lanka Customs (2023) study. Improperly imported under credible foreign brands, the fake items deceive Sri Lankan consumers and harm legitimate businesses. Shoes are one of the most counterfeited product categories in Sri Lanka and across the globe, making about 22% of the global counterfeit trade (OECD, 2016). The estimated value of Sri Lanka's counterfeit shoe industry is Rs. 8 billion, which has an effect on the profits and sales of the real shoe companies (FICCI-CASCADE, 2015).

The main reason why counterfeit items are so popular with consumers is because they are affordable, appealing to those who are budget and value concerned. There are other factors than price that affect consumers' choices to purchase counterfeit items. Social, psychological, and individual factors influence consumers' attitudes, intentions, and counterfeit goods-purchasing behaviors. Marketers and governments need to fully comprehend these components in order to avoid counterfeiting and protect customers and brands (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000).

This study paper aims to address the need for more comprehensive and empirical research on the factors influencing Sri Lankan consumers' choices to purchase counterfeit footwear goods. The majority of study on counterfeit goods has overlooked emerging markets like Sri Lanka, India, China, and Brazil, despite the fact that counterfeiting is more complex and pervasive in these regions than it is in developed countries like the US, UK, and Germany. Furthermore, rather than taking into account the interaction and interplay of a variety of factors, including situational, social, psychological, and attitudinal aspects, the majority of previous research has focused on one or a small number of elements, such as cost, quality, danger, and ethics, to explain why people buy counterfeit goods. Furthermore, most prior studies have used a linear and direct approach to investigate the relationship between the factors and counterfeit purchase behavior, ignoring the mediating and moderating effects of other variables like consumer ethnocentrism and moral decoupling that may alter or influence the direction and strength of the relationship (Agarwal & Panwar, 2015; Singh et al., 2022).

As a result, the following questions are the focus of this study: "What are the important factors that influence the consumer purchase behaviour of counterfeit shoes?" "How do social factors and Personality factors influence Attitude towards counterfeit shoes and Purchase intention?" "How do Attitude and Purchase intention mediate the relationship between social factors, Personality factors and Actual purchase behaviour?" "How does Consumer ethnocentrism moderate the relationship between Attitude, Purchase intention and Actual purchase behaviour?" "How does

Moral decoupling moderate the moderated relationship between Attitude, Purchase intention and Actual purchase behaviour by Consumer ethnocentrism?" "How does Consumer ethnocentrism moderate the relationship between Attitude and Actual purchase behaviour through Purchase intention?" "How does Moral decoupling moderate the moderated relationship between Attitude, Purchase intention and Actual purchase behaviour by Consumer ethnocentrism through Purchase intention?" .

Notable are the study's theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on planned behavior, consumer behavior, and marketing. This study will provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the factors influencing consumer purchase behavior of counterfeit footwear products in Sri Lanka through the use of a multidimensional and dynamic approach that takes into account social, personality, attitudinal, and situational factors and their direct, indirect, and moderated effects. This study will also test and assess the theory of planned behavior in the context of counterfeit products, as well as increase its applicability and generalizability to other product categories and markets. This study will also have practical implications for consumers, regulators, and marketers by providing suggestions on how to maximize customer preference for real things and increase awareness of them while reducing the demand for counterfeit goods. Furthermore, this study will uphold the original brand owners' intellectual property rights and encourage ethical and conscientious customer behavior.

2 Literature review

2.1 International Studies on Counterfeit Products

Bloch et al. (1993) found that those who purchase counterfeit goods and services are seen as being lower socially status, less successful, and more confident than those who do not. Conversely, those who purchased fake goods and services were self-assured and thought highly of themselves. Their emphasis on satisfaction eroded the customers' favorable opinion of counterfeiting. Scientists Chakraborty et al. (1997) discovered that, in comparison to low ethnocentric consumers, highly ethnocentric consumers perceive higher risk, evaluate a counterfeit more negatively, and feel more guilty after buying counterfeits when the original is made in Germany and lower risk when the original is made in the United States. In the fictional vehicle component study, 130 students from the US participated. Ang et al. (2001) looked at Danish customers' purchasing habits in relation to counterfeit audio and video CDs. Three hundred respondents' responses were gathered. According to the report, men were more prone than women to buy CDs without authorization. The justification put out is that viewers have almost the same enjoyment from the pirated product at a lesser price than from the original. The factors influencing Hong Kong consumers' inclination to buy non-deceptive counterfeit goods are examined by Prendergast et al. (2002). This study, which included a structured questionnaire and counter-biasing remarks, found that low-splendors on non-deceptive pirated brands are mostly blue-collar workers or students between the ages of 19 and 24 who have completed secondary school and earn HK$1,999 or less per month. The research finds that customers may be able to recognize or buy genuine counterfeit products since they are often available and reasonably priced. The outcome also shows that different criteria are used to different product categories when selecting non-deceptive counterfeit trademarks. In order to combat counterfeiting, the study suggests that politicians work together with original brand producers. Chiou et al. (2005) studied 207 young Taiwanese consumers on idol singers and bands. It was shown that attitudes toward music piracy, which is substantially correlated with intents to purchase pirated CDs, are lowered by perceptions of social consensus, perceived closeness, perceived prosecution risk, attributive satisfaction, and idolization of artists or bands. Veloutsou and Bian

(2008) examined the connections between total risk and six distinct perceived risk dimensions, as well as how these dimensions could influence overall risk while buying counterfeit goods in two distinct contexts. 525 responses were gathered using a self-administered tool; 230 were from the UK and 295 from China. The findings corroborate the two conjectured scenarios' substantial link between the perceived risk's constituent elements. Psychological risk is the one element that unquestionably influences total risk in both situations. The data in this research refutes the idea that consumers should consider social risk while making purchases of counterfeit goods. Kim and Karpova (2010) use the theory of planned behavior to evaluate the underlying mechanism of intent to buy fashion counterfeits and investigate consumer motivations that may account for attitudes toward making such purchases. For this research, 336 female college students were selected at random to take part. The findings demonstrate that prior purchasing behavior, normative susceptibility, value awareness, and product appearance are significant predictors of views on purchasing fashion counterfeit items. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between the propensity to buy stylish counterfeit items and attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Michaelidou and Christodoulides (2011) look at how attitudes and intentions toward counterfeit goods are affected by perceived danger, price knowledge, and ethical duty. A survey conducted online yielded 200 responses for the study. The study's conclusions demonstrate how attitudes and purchase intentions are changed in different ways based on the variable and its relative weight in the two product settings. Research has shown that sentiments toward symbolic and counterfeit commodities are significantly predicted by perceived threat and ethical obligation. In contrast, when it comes to experiential objects, price awareness is the only element that may predict attitudes toward them; it has no effect on purchase intention in the case of counterfeit goods. Hanzaee and Taghipourian (2012) examined the demand side of counterfeiting in Iran, the nation with the second-highest population, by determining and examining the variables influencing Iranian consumers' opinions on non-deceptive counterfeiting over time. The SEM results for the X generation (52.43%) and Y generation (47.57%) groups show that attitudes about counterfeit goods are negatively impacted by perceived risk and risk aversion. However, the search of personal satisfaction has little bearing on opinions held by people of any age. Other variables do, however, have varying effects on views. (2013) Nguyen and Tran looked at 300 employees who were situated in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City. This research investigates the factors influencing consumers' perceptions of genuine imitation and counterfeit high-end fashion items. The study's findings indicate that social media and upbringing have an impact on consumers' opinions about luxury goods that are fake or fraudulent. Customers' opinions of these goods are negatively impacted by personal pleasure, on the other hand. Finding the important variables influencing Saudi customers' opinions on counterfeit products and the correlation between such opinions and purchase intents were the main objectives of Albarq's (2015) research. The study's findings are consistent with the theory that "perceived risk" is a key factor in determining how consumers would perceive fake and counterfeit goods. 520 respondents were chosen for the study from the Saudi Arabian market in Riyadh. Turkyilmaz and Uslu's (2014) study in "Turkey" aimed to examine the influence of many factors, such as materialism, integrity, personal delight, status consumption, and value awareness, on consumers' inclinations to buy counterfeit fashion products. For the purposes of the study, 879 replies from both men and women were considered. According to the data, "status consumption" seems to be the main element influencing customers' inclination to buy counterfeit goods. According to Angkouw and Rumokoy (2016), perceived pricing has a big impact on a customer's propensity to purchase shoes from fake brands. One hundred people participated in the Manado research study. According to the study, shoe manufacturers should offer more reasonably priced copies of premium brands in order to influence consumer views and discourage copying. Majid (2017) examined the impact of the "nation of origin" image on the likelihood of drug duplication for both expensive and non-expensive medications. The United States of America and India were the study's research subjects. The results of the investigation

show that there is a higher chance of copying costly foreign-origin pharmaceuticals in India than there is of copying cheap foreign-origin pharmaceuticals. The American studies likewise found similar outcomes. The research was carried out by Li et al. (2018) in order to learn more about how consumers utilize purchases of counterfeit goods to create and navigate their moralistic identities. Studies also examine how consumers use counterfeit items as symbolic resources to mimic or replicate China's deeply ingrained corporate philosophy and social networks. The study's conclusions show that the research participants attempted to make sense of their counterfeit consuming behavior by using moralistic interpretations based on Chinese sociocultural standards. Orth et al. (2019) carried out two investigations. Study 1, with 356 customers, found that pleasant sentiments function as a mediating element between the impact of decoupling and purchase intention after accounting for moral justification. Among the things discovered are imitation headphones, running shoes, sunglasses, and perfumes. In order to demonstrate the independent nature of this effect and the mediating function of pleasant emotion, Study 2 (N = 299 customers) manipulates the price advantage and moral dissociation of a counterfeit smartphone. According to Islam et al. (2020), compulsive internet usage (CIU) is significantly correlated with materialism and novelty-seeking behavior, which in turn influences perceptions of high-end counterfeit goods. Their conclusions were founded on the notion of Flow. Furthermore, the product's popularity and favorable online reviews have mitigated the direct effects of materialism, novelty-seeking behavior, and hedonic advantages on buyers' perceptions of premium counterfeit items. Customers' favorable evaluations and their propensity to buy counterfeit items are positively correlated, according to Fiza et al.'s (2021) analysis of structural equation modeling (SEM) in Smart PLS. Conversely, there is no connection between customers' bad perceptions and their inclination to purchase. The research, which took place in Pakistan's Faisalabad, had 150 individuals. Financial gain, perceived behavior control, and propensity to buy counterfeit goods were shown to be highly associated. However, there was no discernible correlation between the hedonic advantages and the urge to buy. The tendency to buy counterfeit goods is strongly positively correlated with subjective norms. In their investigation, Shan et al. (2022) used the ideas of self-discrepancy and moral detachment. The study discovered that the demand for self-enhancement acts as a mediator between actual-ideal self-discrepancy (AISD) and customers' purchase intentions for premium counterfeit goods. Moreover, this association is moderated by moral decoupling; that is, a greater mediated connection is associated with a higher moral decoupling value.

2.2 Social Factors influencing Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

Consumer judgments about buying counterfeit products are significantly influenced by social factors, particularly via the two primary ideas of normative susceptibility and informational susceptibility (Ang et al., 2001; Ting et al., 2016). The inclination to depend on the opinions and suggestions of others, particularly those who are seen as experts or have relevant experience, while making decisions regarding purchases is known as informational susceptibility (Ang et al., 2001). When consumers lack personal knowledge of a brand or product, they become dependent on other opinions for direction and this influences their perceptions of imitation products (Amjad & Mahmood, 2018). Although most research indicates a positive relationship between informational susceptibility and desire to purchase counterfeit goods, several studies have shown non-significant or even negative relationships (Ang et al., 2001). On the other hand, peer pressure and the desire to conform to societal standards are represented by normative susceptibility (Ang et al., 2001). Motivated by this vulnerability, buyers often buy items they believe others would appreciate in an attempt to conform to social standards and project a positive image (Miniard & Cohen, 1983). Similar to informative susceptibility, research on normative susceptibility's effect on counterfeit

buying produces mixed results; some studies show positive, negative, or non-significant connections (Jaiyeoba et al., 2015; Ndereyimana et al., 2021).

Initiatives for research and action aimed at curbing Sri Lanka's counterfeit market need to take these social aspects into account. Further research is necessary to fully explore the nuances of normative and informational susceptibility in the local environment, accounting for factors such as social norms, cultural norms, and the evolving digital landscape. By addressing these study gaps, scholars may devise more effective strategies to mitigate the influence of social determinants on decisions to purchase counterfeit items and promote ethical consumerism in Sri Lanka.

2.3 Personality Variables and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

Customers' personalities have an impact on their purchasing behavior, particularly with regard to counterfeit items. Value awareness, materialism, status consumption, perceived risk, and perceived behavioral control are the five main personality factors that have been shown to influence attitudes and intentions about counterfeit items. Value sensitivity is the focus on great deals and low prices. Customers with a high value awareness are more likely to find counterfeit items attractive due to their lower pricing, even in the face of potential quality difficulties (Ang et al., 2001; Phau & Teah, 2009). Status devouring is the desire to own well-known brands in order to be recognized by others. Those driven by status consumption may be persuaded to purchase counterfeit goods even if they are fake in order to project an image of success and social standing (Eastman et al., 1999; Phau et al., 2009). Materialism is a reflection of how much importance people place on possessions and how they enhance their self-worth. Materialistic persons often have positive opinions about counterfeits, particularly those that mimic high-end goods, as they utilize commodities to fulfill their need for self-enhancement (Negara et al., 2020). "Perceived risk" refers to the uncertainty and potential consequences associated with purchasing things. Because of the greater perceived risk, consumers may be deterred from purchasing counterfeit items owing to concerns about quality, safety, or possible legal repercussions (Tseng et al., 2020). However, some individuals could believe that the likelihood of getting detected with a fake is low, which makes them more willing to purchase them (Bian & Moutinho, 2009). Perceived behavioral control includes the perceived ease or difficulty of carrying out a certain conduct, like buying a counterfeit. Consumers that have a greater sense of control over their choices may be more likely to choose counterfeit items, particularly if they believe doing so would lessen the risks (Penz & Stottinger, 2005).

Understanding the complex relationships between these personality variables and decisions to purchase counterfeit items is crucial for scholars and politicians hoping to regulate Sri Lanka's counterfeit business. Further research is required to explore the nuances of these relationships in a variety of cultural contexts and investigate the moderating effects of factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic position. By acknowledging the intricate relationship between personality traits and counterfeit purchasing behavior, researchers may design more effective treatments and promote moral consumer behavior in Sri Lanka.

2.4 Consumer Ethnocentrism and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

William Graham Sumner first published ethnocentrism in 1906, more than a century ago. Ethnocentrism entered the marketing sector due to theories that it may be a factor affecting consumer behavior (Xu et al., 2017). Consumer ethnocentrism is defined as "beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, even morality, of purchasing things created abroad or foreign" (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Consumer ethnocentrism has been shown to have a detrimental impact on customers' propensity to buy foreign goods (Yen, 2018). This suggests that a strong propensity for ethnocentrism results in a negative perception of buying goods from other nations.

According to Shimp and Sharma (1987), consumers avoid imports since they have an impact on native industries and may either directly or indirectly create unemployment. According to Javalgi et al. (2005), there might be differences in the degree of ethnocentrism within consumers, across areas in the same country, and even between countries. Reardon et al. (2005) state that ethnocentric consumers—especially those from developed countries—often emphasize the benefits of handcrafted products while downplaying those of imported ones. On the other hand, consumer perceptions of regional goods vary in emerging or expanding countries. A 2017 study by Bian and Veloutsou identified ethnocentric customers as those who, even when purchasing counterfeit imports, prefer locally made goods over imported ones. Additionally, a number of research have shown a positive association between consumer ethnocentrism and affluent nations' greater inclination to buy locally manufactured counterfeit goods than do poor nations (Priporas et al., 2015). Consumers' ethnocentric traits function as a moderating factor in affecting how strongly they adjust their buying behavior, according to some studies on the context of counterfeit purchases (Loebnitz & Grunert, 2019).

While many studies have examined this association in a range of scenarios, there is currently a paucity of data on the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and counterfeit purchasing decisions in Sri Lanka. Given Sri Lanka's unique cultural and economic context, further study is required to understand how ethnocentric tendencies impact buyers' perceptions of and intentions toward counterfeit items.

2.5 Moral De-coupling and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

A psychological process known as "moral decoupling" occurs when people decide to consciously keep moral judgments and performance evaluations apart (Bhattacharjee et al., 2013). Moral decoupling proponents acknowledge that a public figure has engaged in immoral behavior, but they counter that the performance of the figure shouldn't be impacted by this behavior. Orth et al. (2019) claim that consumers can tell the difference between the performance characteristics of owning high-end counterfeit goods and the ethical component of their purchasing behavior. According to studies, individuals prefer to disassociate themselves from reality rather than use reasoning to justify their purchase of counterfeit goods (Bhattacharjee et al., 2013). Or, to put it another way, they could acknowledge that someone has acted unethically but still think highly of them (Haberstroh et al., 2017). Moral detachment is a strategy used by someone with a behavioral illness to distract themselves from thoughts of wrongdoing. According to a study by Shan et al. (2022), moral decoupling moderates the association between actual-ideal-selfdiscrepancy and the inclination to buy counterfeit goods. According to Tanveer and Siddiqui's 2021 study, moral decoupling positively and directly affects customers' willingness to acquire counterfeit products.

The connection between decisions to purchase counterfeit products and moral dissociation has been the subject of increasing study, but not much of it has been applied to the Sri Lankan context. This leaves a significant study gap as marketers and policymakers might find it useful to understand how moral detachment is used by Sri Lankan consumers to justify their purchases of counterfeit goods.

2.6 Consumer Attitude and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

As to Ajzen's (1991) definition, attitude encompasses an individual's degree of positive and negative feelings about their actions and the outcomes they get from them. The link between attitude and intention has received a lot of attention in consumer behavior research. A customer's purchase intention, which is based on their attitude toward the goods, often determines their buying behavior, according to the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Consumers' opinions about counterfeit products have a big impact on their purchasing

intentions (Bakshian et al., 2019). Consumers who see counterfeit items favorably are more inclined to purchase them, whereas those who view them negatively are less likely to do so (Ang et al., 2001). Both positive and negative attitudes are formed by predictor variables (Penz & Stottinger, 2005). In the case of fashion products, Quoquab et al. (2016) examined the association between customer attitude and purchase intention and discovered that customers who have favorable thoughts about counterfeit goods are more inclined to buy them. Numerous research have previously claimed that attitude is a significant predictor of intention to purchase counterfeit items, according to Quoquab et al. (2016). A study conducted in 2016 by Muhammad and Ghani found that a customer's attitude sometimes directly affected whether or not they actually bought counterfeit items. Additionally, a number of studies have shown the significant mediating role that sentiments against counterfeit products have in shaping consumer behavior (De Matos et al., 2007; Harun et al., 2012). Thus, it is thought that consumer attitude is the strongest predictor of purchase intention and actual behavior when it comes to purchasing counterfeit items.

Though there is evidence all around the globe connecting consumer thinking to decisions to purchase counterfeit products, nothing is known about the specifics of this connection in the context of Sri Lanka. This results in a substantial research need since understanding how Sri Lankan consumers think about and express counterfeit products might help develop targeted remedies.

2.7 Purchase intention and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

An individual's subjective evaluation of a certain item in response to a specific action is known as their purchase intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). According to Kotler and Armstong (2010), a consumer's decision-making process and activities throughout the acquisition and usage of the things determine their desire to purchase. In a similar spirit, Kotler (2001) defined consumer intention to purchase as the process by which an individual chooses, obtains, and uses products and services to meet desires. buy intention is influenced by customer attitude; a good attitude impacts the intention to buy, which in turn influences the consumer's actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Consumer intention has a great explanatory ability to foresee consumers' actual behavior when it comes to purchasing counterfeit products, according to study by Noor et al. (2018). Another study by Vrontis et al. (2020) supported the prior findings that customer behavior toward counterfeit items had a favorable link with purchase intention. Moreover, a limited number of research found that, when it comes to counterfeit products, intention plays a substantial mediating role in determining consumers' purchase behavior (Saeed & Paracha, 2019). Therefore, it is thought that the intention to produce counterfeit items is the greatest indication of actual purchasing behavior (Saeed & Paracha, 2019).

While the correlation between the desire to acquire and the decision to produce counterfeit products has been well established globally, little is known about the nuances of this connection in the case of Sri Lanka. This information gap provides a critical opportunity to direct targeted efforts and get further insight into the variables affecting the purchasing of counterfeit products in Sri Lanka.

2.8 Actual Purchase Behavior and Counterfeit Purchase Decisions

Consumer purchasing behavior is the way individuals act and think when they purchase and use goods. The process of making a consumer buy consists of six phases. Just one of these many stages is the actual purchasing conduct stage. A customer's actual purchasing behavior is based on how involved they are in the decision-making process. The level of risk associated with a transaction has an effect on customer behavior as well. Expensive items often come with a higher risk, which encourages customers to engage in the buying process. External factors like materialism, status

consumption, novelty seeking, and so on have a direct impact on actual buying behavior when it comes to purchasing counterfeit items (Negara et al., 2020; Patiro & Sihombing, 2014). It has been shown that a consumer's attitude and inclination to buy influence their decision to buy counterfeit goods in the end (Vrontis, 2020). TRA and TPB (Ajzen, 1991) state that consumer attitudes have a preceding impact on buy intentions, which have a previous influence on actual purchase behavior. As a result, it shows how a wide range of factors may directly affect a customer's actual purchasing behavior.

There is still a lot of unsolved research into the nuances of this relationship in Sri Lanka, despite the fact that numerous traits and actual purchasing behavior in the context of counterfeit products have been linked. The opportunity to gain additional insight into how Sri Lankan consumers translate their intentions and attitudes into actual behavior is provided by this information gap, and this knowledge may be used to design effective intervention strategies.

2.9 Sri Lankan Studies

Sri Lanka is a developing nation with a population of over 21 million people and a GDP per capita of over $4,000. The nation has a robust e-commerce industry and a high internet penetration rate of around 34%. However, the nation also has to deal with issues including lax consumer protection, a substantial market for fake goods, and scant intellectual property laws (Withanagamage & Wattegama, 2017). "Products that are intentionally and fraudulently produced and mislabeled by someone other than the original manufacturer to deceive consumers into believing that they are buying the original product" (p. 1) is the definition of counterfeit goods, according to Ahmad et al. (2016). Two types of false goods exist: non-deceptive and misleading. According to Nawez et al. (2015), consumers who purchase dishonest counterfeit products do so unintentionally, whereas those who purchase honest counterfeit goods do so consciously.

Since most studies concentrate on impulsive buying and online shopping, more research is required on Sri Lankan consumer behavior and counterfeit goods. Withanagamage and Wattegama (2017) looked at Sri Lankan customers' internet buying habits. They discovered that although most educated and working customers are interested in shopping online, they are hesitant to buy pricey or luxuries goods since they need to have faith in online sellers. Additionally, they discovered that customers would only spend between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 25,000 on each online transaction. In Karachi, Pakistan, Nawaz et al. (2015) examined the impact of counterfeit goods on customers' purchasing decisions. The study discovered that counterfeit items had little influence on consumers' choices to buy.

Additionally, they discovered that attitudes toward and intents to buy counterfeit items are influenced by social characteristics (such as normative and informational susceptibility) and personality traits (such as materialism, value awareness, status consumption, perceived risk, and behavioral control). Noor and Mushi (2016) examined mainland Tanzanian consumers' purchasing patterns with regard to counterfeit goods. The consumer's ethnocentrism, moral judgment, and moral detachment all influence the link between attitude, intention to buy, and actual act of acquiring counterfeit goods, he noted. Furthermore, he discovered that consumer ethnocentrism and moral detachment had a detrimental influence on attitudes toward and intents to buy counterfeit goods. According to these research, consumers' perceptions and motivations for purchasing counterfeit goods vary, and they are prevalent in developing nations. But while a growing body of research looks at consumer behavior around counterfeit products throughout the world, there are still not many studies that especially address the Sri Lankan context. This is a fantastic opportunity to bridge a significant knowledge gap and gain in-depth comprehension of the distinct dynamics and causes of counterfeit consumption in Sri Lanka.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
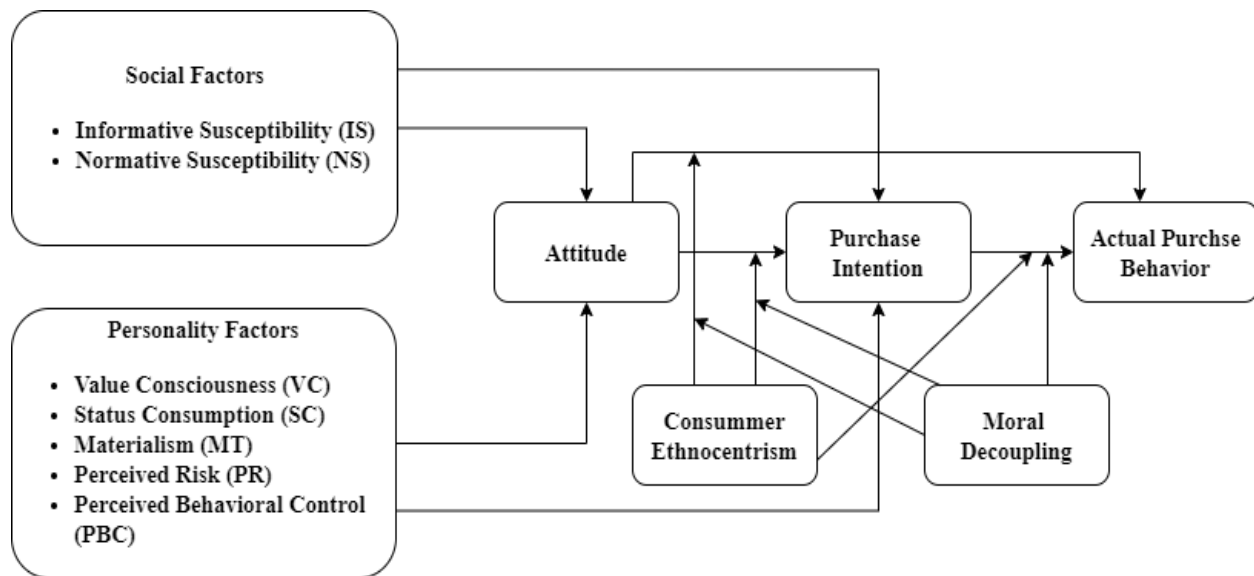
2.11 Hypothesis Development

H1: Consumer perceptions of counterfeit goods are greatly influenced by informative susceptibility

H2: Normative susceptibility is crucial in shaping consumers' perceptions about counterfeit goods.

H3: Value awareness shapes consumers' perceptions of counterfeit goods.

H4: Purchasing status items significantly affects how consumers feel about fake goods.

H5: Materialism significantly affects how consumers feel about counterfeit things.

H6: Consumer perceptions of risk significantly impact their feelings about fake goods.

H7: Consumer perceptions of behavioural control significantly impact their feelings about fake goods.

H8: Informed susceptibility significantly affects consumers' intentions to buy counterfeit goods.

H9: Normative susceptibility is crucial in shaping consumers' desire to acquire counterfeit goods.

H10: Value awareness is crucial in shaping consumers' desire to acquire counterfeit goods.

H11: Consumers' intentions to acquire counterfeit goods are significantly influenced by their consumption of status.

H12: Materialism significantly affects consumers' intentions to buy counterfeit goods.

H13: Consumer purchasing intentions regarding counterfeit goods are significantly influenced by perceived risk.

H14: The perception of behavioural control significantly affects consumers' intentions to acquire counterfeit goods.

H15: The desire to buy counterfeit goods is strongly correlated with attitude.

H16: A substantial correlation exists between attitude and actual purchasing behaviour for counterfeit goods.

H17: The desire to buy and the actual act of buying counterfeit goods are substantially correlated.

H18: In actual purchase behaviour for counterfeit items, attitudes and buying intentions are serial mediators between informational susceptibility and actual purchase behaviour.

H19: Purchase intention and attitude are serial mediators in the link between normative susceptibility and purchasing behaviour for fake goods.

H20: The connection between value awareness and actual purchasing behaviour for counterfeit goods is serially mediated by attitude and buy intention.

H21: The association between status consumption and actual purchase behaviour for counterfeit goods is serially mediated by attitude and buying intention.

H22: The association between materialism and actual purchase behaviour for counterfeit goods is serially mediated by attitude and buying intention.

H23: Buy intention and attitude are serial mediators in the link between perceived risk and actual purchasing behaviour for counterfeit goods.

H24: Buy intention and attitude are serial mediators in the link between perceived behavioural control and actual purchasing behaviour for counterfeit goods.

H25: The effect of consumer ethnocentrism modifies the attitude-to-actual-purchasing behaviour connection for counterfeit goods.

H26: Regarding customer ethnocentrism and actual purchasing behaviour for counterfeit goods, moral decoupling moderates the regulated link of attitude.

H27: The influence of consumer ethnocentrism on the attitude-purchase intention link for counterfeit goods is moderated.

H28: Regarding customer ethnocentrism and attitude towards purchase intention for counterfeit goods, moral decoupling moderates the link.

H29: Consumer ethnocentrism moderates the link between buy intention and actual purchase behaviour when it comes to counterfeit goods.

H30: Consumer ethnocentrism for counterfeit goods moderates the regulated link between purchase intention and actual purchase behaviour when moral dissociation exists.

H31: Consumer ethnocentrism, via purchase intention for counterfeit items, substantially moderates the connection between attitude and actual purchase behaviour.

H32: Consumer ethnocentrism and moral dissociation via purchase intention for counterfeit goods considerably affect the link between attitude and actual purchase behaviour.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Using an exploratory-descriptive research approach with convenience sampling, the variables influencing Sri Lankan consumers' decisions to purchase counterfeit shoes were investigated (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). With the use of this approach, the research topic was thoroughly investigated, hypotheses were tested, and the factors affecting desire for counterfeit brands were confirmed. The chosen unit of analysis for this research was individual consumers who self-reported their purchasing habits and attitudes about counterfeit shoes. By focusing on individual decision-making processes, the study aimed to get nuanced insights into the complex interplay between social, psychological, and attitudinal aspects that drive counterfeit purchase behavior in the Sri Lankan context.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

This study examined the buying patterns of Sri Lankan consumers with reference to counterfeit footwear. The study's emphasis was on the demography of Sri Lankan consumers that purchase counterfeit items. Considering the exploratory nature of the research and the goal of gathering ideas from a diverse range of individuals, convenience sampling was found to be the most practical and generally accessible strategy (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach made it simple for researchers to connect with consumers, such as those who bought popular imitation brands of shoes

including Adidas, Reebok, Nike, and Sketchers (Pleaders, 2021). Convenience sampling recognized the limitations of non-probability sampling with regard to generalizability, but it also made it possible to gather data within the desired population quickly. This made it possible for the minimum required sample size of 385 respondents to be fulfilled using Cochran's (1977) technique. Ultimately, 474 valid responses were obtained, translating to an effective response rate of 66.85%. The sample demographics, which comprised individuals of various ages (18 to over 45), genders (146 females, 328 men), educational backgrounds, and jobs, reflected the diversity of the target community.

3.3 Instrument Development

The research team created a questionnaire written in English and delivered in Sinhala in order to gather primary data. The survey was divided into two sections, the first of which asked questions on research constructs and the other of which focused on demographics. The components underwent minor alterations to align with the study's objectives, but were otherwise evaluated using established metrics from prior research. The answers were recorded in the study using a seven-point Likert-type scale ('1' = strongly disagree; '7' = strongly agree) (Hennigs et al., 2015).

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The study target region was visited, and frequent purchasers of counterfeit goods were approached in order to gather data. We asked for the contact information of any people they knew who had purchased counterfeit goods. Since their anonymity would be protected and their participation would be optional, the respondents were asked to give the survey their whole attention. The survey was done both offline and online, depending on what the respondents found most convenient. Three months, from April to June 2023, were used to gather the data (Cooper & Schindler, 2013).

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

In order to comprehensively explore the complex interactions between the identified variables and assess the created hypotheses, the study used a multidimensional data analysis approach utilizing AMOS 26 and SPSS 25 (Hair et al., 2015). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was the cornerstone since it examined both direct and indirect influences while accounting for the complex interactions between the factors. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis helped to enhance the measurement models and ensure the construct validity of the scales used. Two- and three-way interaction effects were assessed in order to find potential moderating effects of personality and ethnocentrism on the interactions between social traits, attitude, and purchasing behavior. Through serial mediation analysis, the potential mediating role of attitude and buy intention in the relationship between social and personality traits and actual purchasing behavior was uncovered. Additionally, potential latent variables for additional study were identified by descriptive and exploratory factor analysis, which also provided valuable insights into the underlying structure of the data. This broad range of techniques ensured a thorough understanding of the factors influencing Sri Lankan customers' choices to purchase fake shoes, addressing the study's goals and yielding valuable data with applications in the near and far future.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical guidelines and ensured that participants were adequately informed about the aim and extent of the investigation. Before distributing the survey, the researcher got the participants' permission and respected their right to withdraw at any moment. The respondents'

privacy and identity were protected throughout the research; neither their name nor any other personal information was revealed. Furthermore, the paper appropriately identified its sources and recognized the sources of its secondary data, as pointed out by Petrova et al. (2016).

3.7 Limitations The study

It's critical to consider the study's limitations while evaluating the findings. The non-probability sample method used in the study may have limited how broadly and representatively the results may be used. Moreover, the research just looked at the "shoes" product category, which could not be a typical sample of the behaviors of consumers of other counterfeit goods. Moreover, the research depended on self-reported information, which is susceptible to memory bias and social desirability. Moreover, Podsakoff et al. (2003) noted that the research did not account for other variables that may also impact buyers' decisions to purchase counterfeit goods, such as product quality, price, and availability.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Normality Test

The univariate normality of each construct's item was assessed using the skewness-kurtosis approach by Black et al. (2010) and Rana et al. (2021). Following analysis using SPSS 25, the statistical values for skewness and kurtosis fell within the appropriate limits. As each skewness value was below the cut-off point of "3" and each kurtosis value was below "8," all of the data are consistent with the univariate distribution's normalcy (Kline, 2005; Hopkins & Weeks, 1990).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Multicollinearity

In order to determine if the variables were multicollinear, the researchers first looked at the correlation matrix. Since the correlations were less than 0.75 in the initial correlation investigation, there is no evidence of a collinearity problem. Multicollinearity is not a problem with the data in this study since the correlations were less than 0.75; previous research indicated that correlations of more than 0.75 may alert researchers to multicollinearity (Tsui et al., 1995). As an additional check, the researchers verified the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF). They found that there was no multicollinearity as all of the variable VIF values were less than 5 and the tolerance value was more than 0.10 (Montgomery et al., 2021). The ranges of the averages and standard deviations for each variable are 2.66 to 5.57 and 0.92 to 1.88, respectively. The skewness and kurtosis values, which range between -1.513 and 1.081 and -0.547 and 2.963 for each item, respectively, demonstrate that the data have a normal distribution.

4.3 Common Method Variance (CMV)

There is an underlying common method bias in every survey-based research. In order to minimize common method bias, researchers used 48 scale items and 12 constructs (IS, NS, VC, SC, MT, PR, PCB, CET, MD, ATT, PI, and APB) in their single-factor test, as advised by (Harman, 1976; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Less than 50%, or 14.08%, was Harman's Single-Factor score for this collection of data; this is within an acceptable range and indicates that common procedure bias is not a problem (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition to doing the standard Harman's one-factor analysis, the researchers used PLS to generate the latent method factor and calculated inner VIF values for each construct by loading all indicators into it. If the VIF at the factor level is less than 3.3, which indicates pathological collinearity, the model may be contaminated by technique bias (Kock, 2015). Method bias may contaminate the model if VIF is greater than 3.3. Furthermore, the

researchers noticed that each construct's inner VIF value was less than 3.3, suggesting that there may not be a problem with the CMV data.

4.4 Non-Response Bias Test

Additionally, researchers resolved the non-response biassed test, a potential problem in any survey study, by using the "time trend extrapolation method" (t-test) and following Armstrong and Overton's (1977) recommendations. A statistically significant difference between these groups is not shown by the method, which compares the first 100 answers with the final 100 replies (Lambert & Harrington, 1990). Additionally, it displays the results of the independent-sample t-test (mean, SD, t-statistics, and two-tailed sig. level), which demonstrate the absence of non-response bias in the sample.

To confirm the validity of the adjusted variables, the researcher conducted the following investigation.

4.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Before going on to the measurement model, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using SPSS v. 25 in accordance with the suggestions offered by Gerbing and Anderson (1988) to identify the factors. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used in the study to confirm the components' underlying dimensions and structure (Costello & Osborne, 2005). A acceptable Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) score of 0.832 was found, along with a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.01$) in the data. Since these results demonstrate a suitable sample and an inter-item correlation, it was believed that further component analysis might be conducted (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). The factor loading for each item falls between the range of (0.665 to 0.950), which was above the threshold value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2012), with the exception of two items from "Perceived risk" and one item from "Normative susceptibility," which were eliminated for the final analysis due to poor factor loading <0.50 (Hair et al., 2009). Every one of the 48 components had a communality greater than 0.50, according to Hair et al. (2012). The Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings show that 12 latent constructs with Eigenvalues > "1," or 74.705 percent of the total variance, were recovered after varimax rotation.

4.6 Measurement Model and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The applicability of the measuring model and the validity of the current constructs of counterfeit brands were confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis using the "maximum likelihood method" of the estimate. Researchers used the two-step process of Anderson and Gerbing (1988) to verify the measurement model before evaluating hypothesis testing. Nunnally, 1994; Moss et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2014) The factor loadings, Cronbach alpha, Maximum Shared Variability (MSV), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) are all above acceptable limits. The goodness of fit values for the model indicate an excellent match: $\chi2/df$ 1.096, RMSEA 0.014, RMR 0.066, CFI 0.993, GFI 0.914, and NFI 0.924. All of the indications were found to be within reasonable limits (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, Cronbach alpha (0.733 to 0.964) and composite reliability (0.823 to 0.965), both of which were greater than the 0.70 criteria, supported the reliability of the survey instrument (Hair et al., 2009).

4.7 Convergent Validity

By looking at the factor loadings of each indicator, which ranged from (0.665 to 0.950), which is higher than the allowable limit of 0.5 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 1998), it was possible to assess the measures' convergent validity. Furthermore, the AVE for each of the constructions (0.537 to 0.875) was more good beyond the permitted ranges of 0.50 and MSV (0.005 to 0.600) in

accordance with the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. Furthermore, it was noted that each construct's composite dependability (CR) ranged from 0.823 to 0.965, which was higher than the 0.70 threshold (Hair et al., 2009). These findings corroborate the convergent validity and internal consistency of the indicators (Babin & Zikmund, 2016).

4.8 Discriminant Validity

In 1959, Campbell and Fiske used the phrase "discriminant validity" to describe a validation strategy based on the generally acknowledged idea that tests may be deemed invalid if they exhibit excessive correlations with unrelated tests (Campbell, 1960; Thorndike, 1920). The study applies Ronkko and Cho's (2022) recommended standards to assess the discriminant validity of research data. To assess discriminant validity, one should compare the square root of AVEs with the correlations of the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The concept has a discriminant solid value, as seen by the correlation, which shows that the square root of AVE (0.732 to 0.935) outperforms the construct correlation with all other constructs. For every statement, the AVE values vary from 0.537 to 0.875. Together with the CFA data, these figures demonstrate the discriminant validity between these 12 constructs.

4.9 Alternative Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model

Eleven other possible models were compared to the conventional Twelve-factor model by the researchers. The results indicate that the data is reasonably well-fitted by the Twelve-factor model [$\chi2 = 1111.304$; df = 1014; $\chi2/df = 1.096$; RMSEA = 0.014; RMR = 0.066; CFI = 0.993; GFI = 0.914; TLI = 0.992]. While the baseline model gave an acceptable fit of the model to the data, the one-factor model exhibited low goodness of fit statistics [$\chi2 = 12712.249$; df = 1080; $\chi2/df = 11.771$; RMSEA = 0.151; RMR = 0.397; CFI = 0.142; NNFI = 0.104; NFI = 0.135; GFI = 0.432]. Metrics like RMSEA <0.08, RMR <0.08, CFI >0.95, and GFI >0.90, which all imply that the model fits the data well, are considered indicators of construct uniqueness for a conceptual model (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

4.10 Hypotheses Testing

In this section, researchers investigate the hypotheses based on goals two and three using the tools AMOS 26 and SPSS 25. Maximum likelihood estimation and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to evaluate the proposed hypotheses (H1 through H14). According to Byrne (2016), SEM is a technique that aims to incorporate known variables into a network of latent (unknown) variables. Despite the fact that individual regression tests would not be as useful for analyzing the correlations, SEM was used due to the complexity of the model (Kline, 2015). The model and the data, all of which were inside an acceptable range, were well matched, according to the fit indices. The total variance explained by all variables (IS, NS, VC, SC, MT, PR, and PBC) in Attitude (ATT) is 10%, and Purchase intention (PI) is 11.5%. The model was significant, with p<0.001. The following diagrams depict the structural models related to goals two and three.

Figure 2: Structural model (dependent variable= Attitude (ATT)) (objective 2)
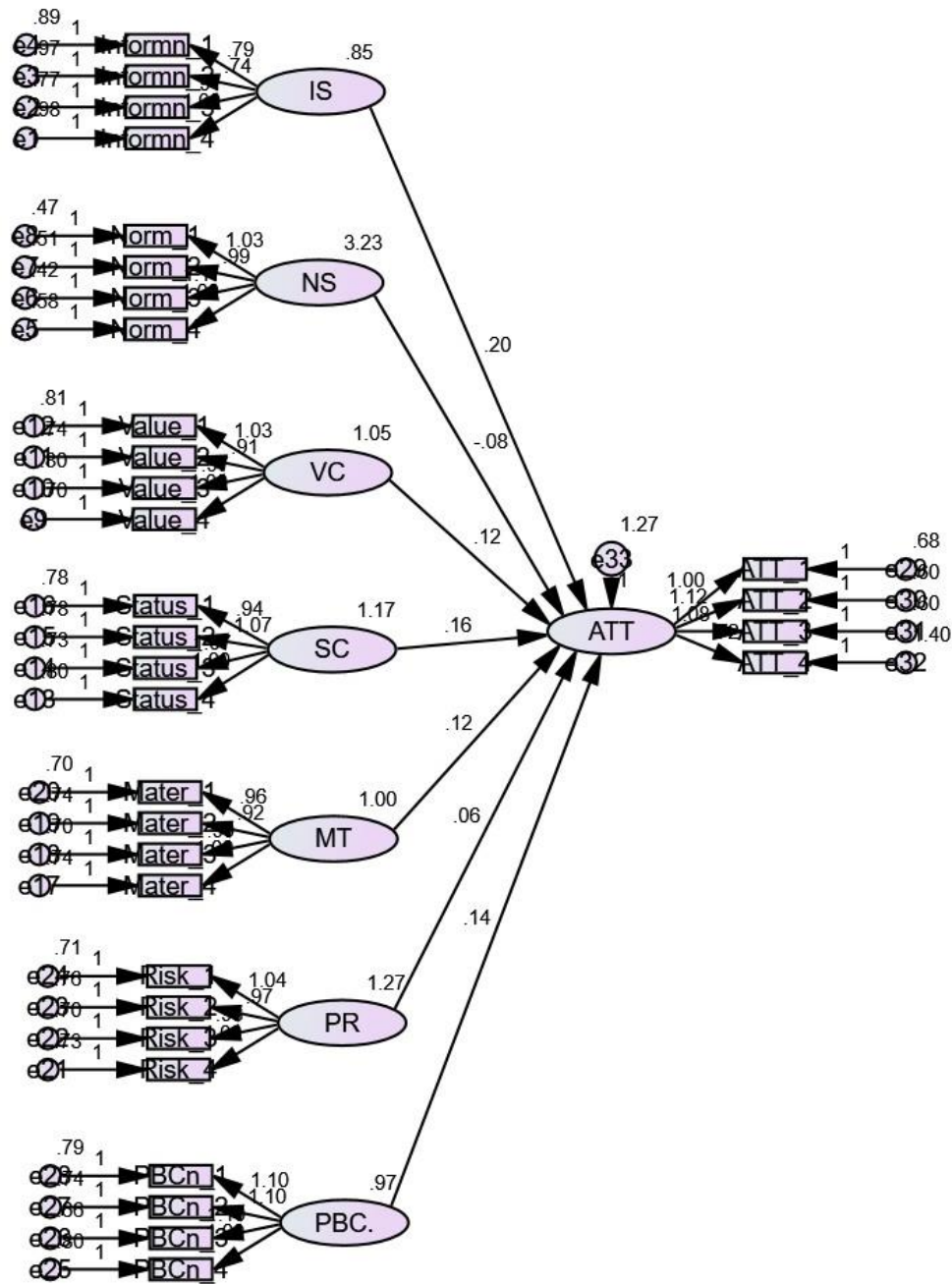
Figure 3: Structural model (dependent variable= Purchase intention (PI)) (objective 3)
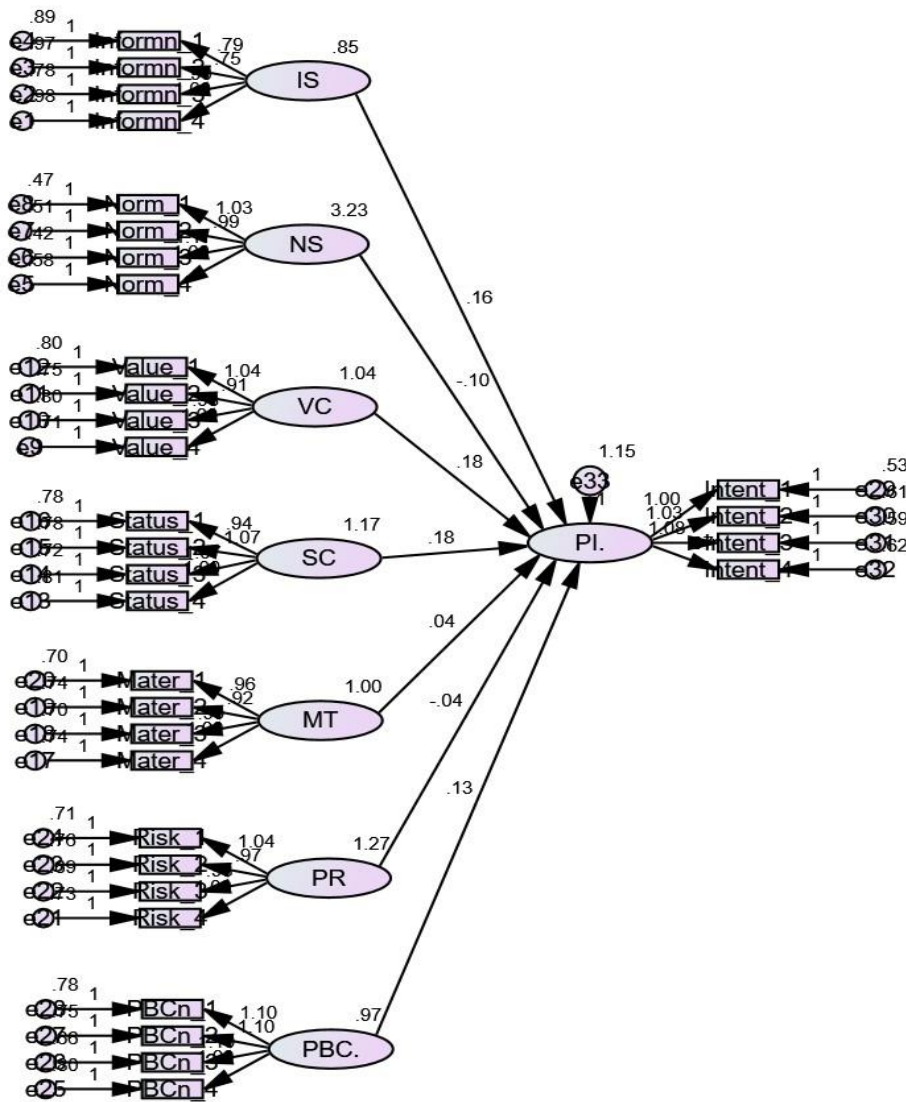
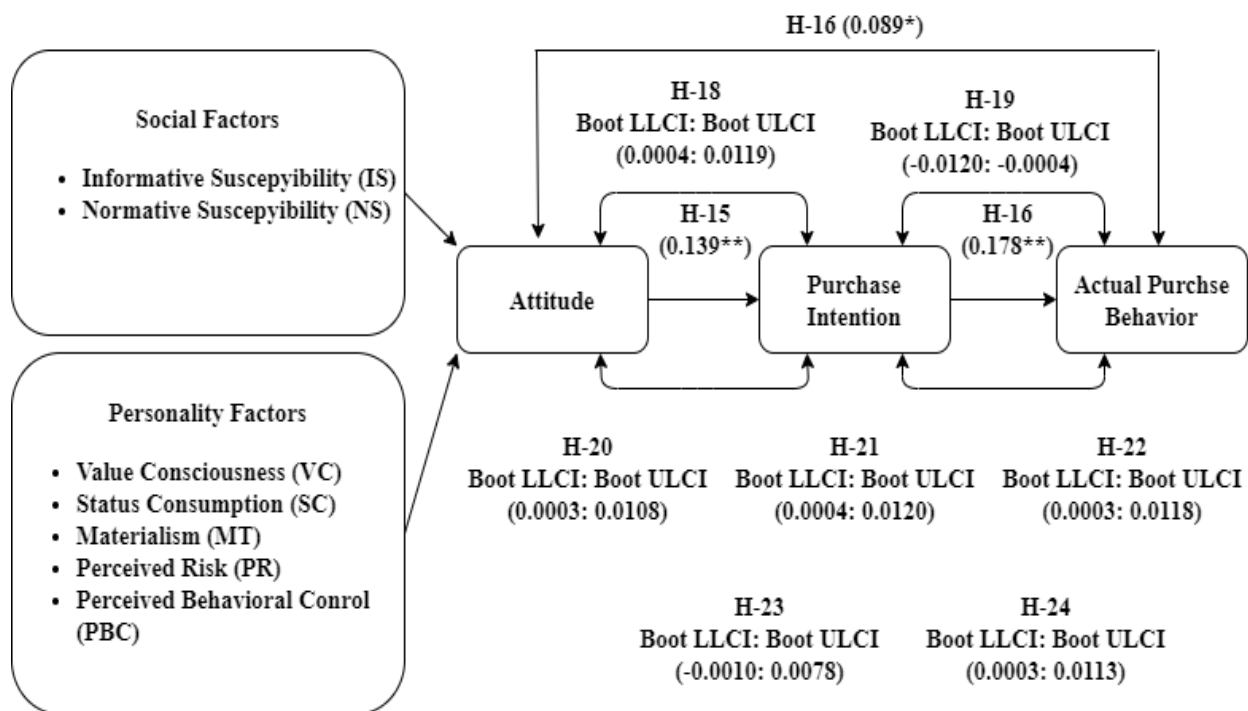**Table 1:** Testing of Hypothesis (H1 to H14) [Direct effect]

Relationship	Coefficient beta (β)	Se	CR (t-statistics)	Results
Informative susceptibility→ Attitude (**H1**)	.158**	.071	2.852	*Supported*
Normative susceptibility→ Attitude (**H2**)	-.121*	.032	-2.538	*Supported*
Value consciousness→ Attitude (**H3**)	.104*	.059	2.027	*Supported*
Status consumption→ Attitude (**H4**)	146**	.056	2.874	*Supported*
Materialism→ Attitude (**H5**)	.104*	.061	2.026	*Supported*
Perceived risk→ Attitude (**H6**)	.054	.053	1.075	*Not Supported*
Perceived behavioral control→ Attitude (**H7**)	.118*	.062	2.318	*Supported*
Informative susceptibility→ Purchase intention (**H8**)	.133*	.067	2.435	*Supported*
Normative susceptibility→ Purchase intention (**H9**)	-.162**	.030	-3.436	*Supported*
Value consciousness→ Purchase intention (**H10**)	.160**	.057	3.146	*Supported*

Status consumption→ Purchase intention **(H11)**	.175**	.053	3.474	*Supported*
Materialism→ Purchase intention **(H12)**	.034	.057	0.676	*Not Supported*
Perceived risk→ Purchase intention **(H13)**	-.044	.050	-0.897	*Not Supported*
Perceived behavioral control→ Purchase intention **(H14)**	.110*	.058	2.184	*Supported*

Note: [Significance level = *<.05; **<.01], se= standard error; CR= critical ratio; R^2 (variance explain) = .100 (10%); R^2 (variance explain) = .115 (11.5%)

The study used Hayes's (2018) Process macro (model 6) to assess the direct and indirect (serial mediation) impacts on the hypotheses (H15 to H24). In order to influence the actual purchase behavior, this was accomplished by incorporating social and personality traits as an independent variable, attitude as a first mediator, and buy intention as a second mediator variable.

Figure 4: The empirical model of objective 4

Table 2: Testing of Hypothesis (H15 to H24) [Direct and Indirect effect]

Relationship	Effect (β)	Se	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Results
Attitude → Purchase intention **(H15)**	.1392** (t value: 3.0438)	.0450	.0485	.2252	*Supported*
Attitude → Actual purchase behavior **(H16)**	.0898* (t value: 1.9820)	.0463	.0008	.1829	*Supported*
Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H17)**	.1787** (t value: 3.9537)	.0470	.0935	.2783	*Supported*

Informative susceptibility → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H18)**	.0043	.0030	.0004	.0119	*Supported*
Normative susceptibility → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H19)**	-.0042	.0031	-.0120	-.0004	*Supported*
Value consciousness → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H20)**	.0039	.0027	.0003	.0108	*Supported*
Status consumption → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H21)**	.0043	.0030	.0004	.0120	*Supported*
Materialism → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H22)**	.0042	.0030	.0003	.0118	*Supported*
Perceived risk → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H23)**	.0024	.0023	-.0010	.0078	*Not Supported*
Perceived behavioral control → Attitude → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H24)**	.0040	.0029	.0003	.0113	*Supported*

Note: [Significance level = *<.05; **<.01], se= standard error; LLCI= lower limit confidence-interval; ULCI= upper limit confidence-interval

The hypothesis (H25 to H32) was tested using Hayes (2018) process macro (models 3, 11 and 14) by inserting the following variables: attitude as an independent variable, consumer ethnocentrism as a first moderating and moral de-coupling as a second moderating variable, purchase intention as a mediating and dependent variable, and finally, actual purchase behavior as a dependent variable. This allowed for an examination of the (complex relationship) two-way and three-way interaction effect.

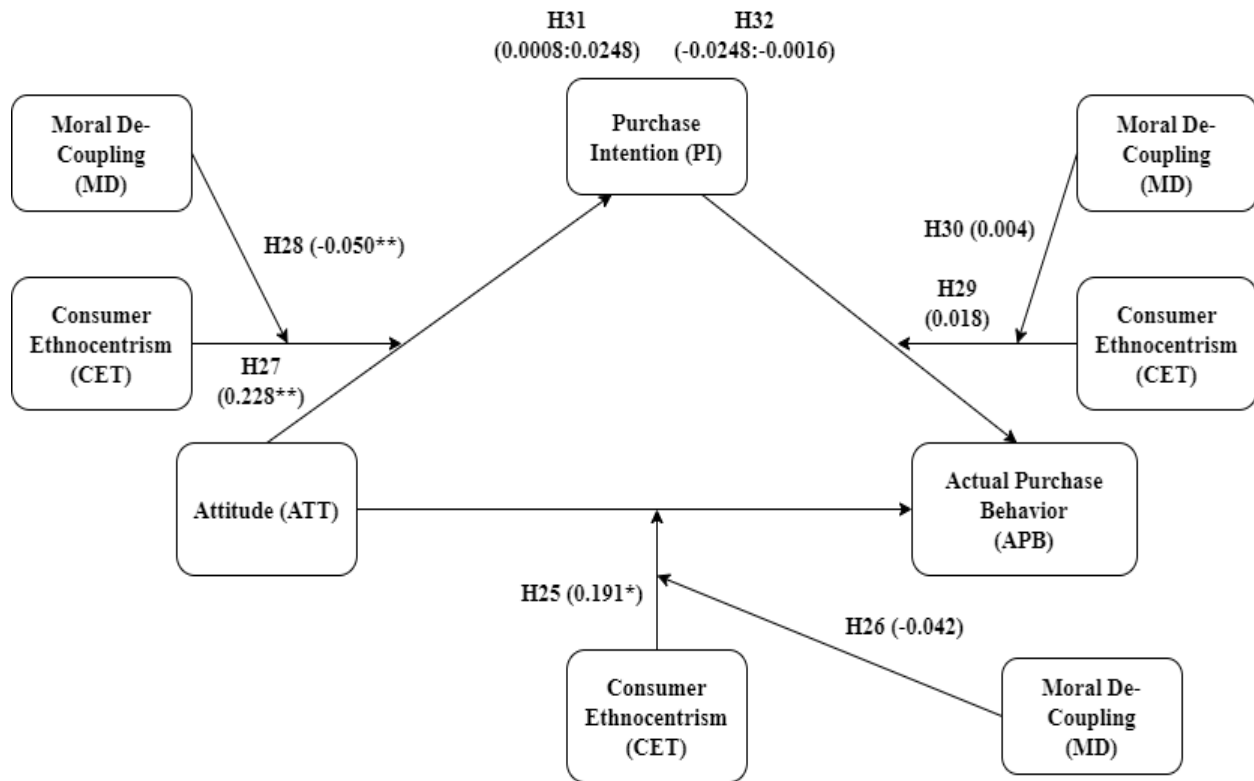**Figure 5:** The empirical model of objective 5

Table 3: Testing of Hypothesis (H25 to H32) [Two-way and Three-way Interaction]

Relationships	Effect (β)	se	t	LLCI	ULCI	Results
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism → Actual purchase behavior **(H25)**	.1911*	.0881	2.1676	.0178	.3643	*Supported*
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism **x** Moral decoupling → Actual purchase behavior **(H26)**	-.0421*	.0171	-2.4660	-.0757	-.0086	*Supported*
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism → Purchase intention **(H27)**	.2287**	.0844	2.7105	.0629	.3946	*Supported*
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism **x** Moral decoupling → Purchase intention **(H28)**	-0.0507**	.0164	-3.0993	-0.0828	-0.0186	*Supported*
Purchase intention **x** Consumer ethnocentrism → Actual purchase behavior **(H29)**	.0184	.0906	.2026	-0.1597	0.1965	*Not supported*
Purchase intention **x** Consumer ethnocentrism **x** Moral decoupling → Actual purchase behavior **(H30)**	.0048	.0178	.2681	-0.0302	0.0397	*Not supported*
	Index	BootSE	LLCI		ULCI	
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior **(H31)**	.0110	.0065	.0008		.0261	*Supported*
Attitude **x** Consumer ethnocentrism **x** Moral	-0.0105	.0060	-0.0248		-0.0016	*Supported*

decoupling → Purchase intention → Actual purchase behavior (H32)					

Note: [Significance level = *<.05; **<.01], se= standard error; LLCI= lower limit confidence-interval; ULCI= upper limit confidence-interval

5 Discussion

This study examines how consumer ethnocentrism, social and personality factors, and moral decoupling impact the relationship between attitude, purchase intention, and actual counterfeit shoe purchasing behavior in Sri Lanka. It does this by presenting the findings of a multi-layered, complex, moderated-moderated mediation model. SEM and Hayes's (2018) methods were used to analyze the information obtained from 474 Sri Lankan respondents. The main findings are as follows:

After being examined and validated, it was found that the dependent and independent variables employed in this study on counterfeit items satisfied the criteria for dependability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Furthermore, normative susceptibility was shown to have a considerable unfavorable influence on consumers' perceptions toward counterfeit shoes. On the other hand, there were favorable and noteworthy advantages for informational susceptibility, value awareness, status consumption, materialism, and perceived behavioral control. Perceived danger did not substantially affect customer sentiment. The study demonstrated that materialism and normative susceptibility had a negative and substantial influence on the propensity to buy counterfeit shoes.

On the other hand, there were favorable and noteworthy impacts from informational susceptibility, value awareness, status consumption, and perceived behavioral control. Perceived risk had no statistically significant effect on purchase intention. The study found that purchase intentions and consumer mood had a favorable and substantial influence on the purchasing behavior of counterfeit shoes. Furthermore, the study found that consumer attitude and purchase intention served as serial mediators between the impacts of informational sensitivity, value awareness, status consumption, materialism, and counterfeit shoe purchasing behavior. Between perceived risk, perceived behavioral control, and actual purchasing behavior, there were no mediating effects. The association between customer attitude and actual counterfeit shoe purchase behavior was found to be reduced by consumer ethnocentrism, according to the research. Through consumer attitude and purchase intention, it also mitigated the impacts of materialism, value awareness, informational susceptibility, and status consumption on the buying behavior of genuine counterfeit shoes. The relationship between the desire to acquire and the actual behavior of buying counterfeit shoes was not moderated by consumer ethnocentrism. The research also found that consumer ethnocentrism via attitude and buy intention modulated the mediated effects of informational susceptibility, value awareness, materialism, and status consumption on actual purchase behavior. Furthermore, the mediated association between consumer ethnocentrism and actual purchase behavior was modified by moral de-coupling. The impact of customer ethnocentrism on the relationship between purchase intention and actual behavior was not impacted by moral decoupling.

The findings of this study provide new understandings into the socio-psychological facets of the purchase behavior of counterfeit goods, as well as practical implications for consumers, legislators, and marketers. Marketers can use the insights from this study to develop strategies that effectively deter consumers from buying counterfeit shoes by emphasizing the negative effects of normative susceptibility, perceived risk, and consumer ethnocentrism and lowering the appeal of informative susceptibility, value consciousness, status consumption, and materialism. The findings of this study may be used by policymakers to develop and implement laws and policies that discourage the production and distribution of counterfeit footwear while protecting the intellectual property

rights of the genuine firms. The study's conclusions increase customers' knowledge of the moral and societal repercussions of purchasing phony shoes, enabling them to make more deliberate and moral decisions.

6 Conclusions

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the present study investigated the direct effects of social and personality traits on consumer attitude and purchase intention. The relationship between social characteristics, personality traits, and buying behavior has also been studied using a serial mediation of attitude and purchase intention. Moreover, the moderating effects of consumer ethnocentrism and moral dissociation affect the relationship between attitude, purchasing intention, and actual purchase behavior for counterfeit shoes. The results demonstrate that attitudes are believed to have a substantial correlation with buy intentions, which serve as a reliable predictor of actual purchasing behavior. Furthermore, opinions are believed to have a direct influence on real purchasing behavior. Six theories were not supported by the inquiry, while 26 others were in total. The research's conclusions are consistent with the theory that a range of factors, such as the product (value, price, and quality), peer information, social norms, self-efficacy, locus of control, money, and social status, influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions and, ultimately, their actual behavior. Customers having a more ethnocentric perspective of the country both enhanced and diminished the relationship between attitude, buy intention, and actual purchase behavior for counterfeit items. It has the ability to separate their moral code from day-to-day operations. These results help policymakers and marketers create strategies that use these important variables influencing consumer behavior to stop counterfeiting. Due in part to customers switching from in-person to online buying, as well as the significant increase in the usage of counterfeiters brought on by global pandemics, counterfeit purchasing is still a top research focus.

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