
A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT KNOCKOFF OR COUNTERFEITS WITH RESPECT TO THE CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of product knockoffs and counterfeits has become a major concern in the global marketplace. These unauthorized replicas not only violate intellectual property rights but also have serious consequences for consumers. It is tricky to tell the difference between a genuine and a counterfeit product because counterfeit goods have invaded the market all over the world. In truth, many people search for and purchase counterfeit products, and the purchase of knockoff and counterfeit products has increased over time. The primary purpose of this research is to study the influence of product knockoff or counterfeit on consumers and the consumer's ability to detect such products and the effectiveness of awareness by the government-corporate sector. Importantly this study suggests that significant awareness should be provided to consumers relating to knockoff or counterfeit products to reduce the purchase of such products. This study also focuses on the awareness of the legal provisions against knockoff and counterfeit products on consumers. By analysing relevant literature and conducting surveys, this research will explore the factors that contribute to the consumer decision-making process when encountering counterfeit products. For the same, a webbased survey was conducted of 92 respondents through a structured questionnaire based in Kanchipuram, India. It was conducted by measuring consumers' interest in knockoff and counterfeiting products, their ability to detect such products, reasons for detection and nondetection, and their interest in lodging complaints against such products. The author of this research paper provides valuable insights into the effects of knockoffs and counterfeits on consumers, helping the consumers with effective strategies to combat this issue.

Keywords: Consumers, Counterfeit Products, Knockoffs, Consumer perception, Detection, Lodging Complaints, Intellectual Property Rights.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient proverb "If you can make it, they can fake it" holds even today. Counterfeit products and knockoffs significantly impact consumer behaviour and purchase decisions. With global trade and e-commerce on the rise, counterfeit goods are a growing concern, particularly in India. This study investigates their influence on consumers, outlining the problem and objectives.

A person is said to "counterfeit" when they make one thing resemble another with the intent to practice deception through that resemblance or with the knowledge that deception will likely be practiced thereby. Counterfeit goods are illegal copies of genuine goods that are produced and distributed without the knowledge or authorization of the original brand owner, posing health, safety, and trust risks to consumers.

Knockoffs are described as "counterfeit goods that resemble the appearance and design of genuine fashion products without claiming to be the original brands. Knockoffs are defined as "products that copy the design, features, and appearance of the original branded products but do not carry the genuine brand name." This definition highlights that knockoffs mimic the visual and functional aspects of genuine products without using the brand name or claiming to be genuine.

LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Several laws and regulations are in place to address counterfeiting and protect intellectual property rights. The following legal frameworks play a significant role in combating counterfeit goods:

1. Trademarks Act, 1999: Protects registered trademarks and provides remedies against infringement, including counterfeit goods.

A registered trademark is infringed when a person uses an identical or deceptively similar mark in relation to goods or services that are identical or similar to those for which the trademark is registered. Counterfeit goods bearing identical or deceptively similar trademarks can be considered an infringement.

Counterfeit goods, which encompass the sale of goods or services with false trademarks, are subject to penalties. Offenders can face imprisonment for a term ranging from 6 months to 3 years, along with fines that must be a minimum of Rs 50,000 and can extend up to Rs 2,00,000. These penalties aim to deter the manufacture, sale, distribution, or possession of counterfeit goods in India and protect the rights of trademark owners.

2. Copyright Act, 1957: Protects original literary, artistic, and musical works, including provisions to address infringement of copyrighted goods.

The reproduction, distribution, or sale of copyrighted works without the consent of the copyright owner constitutes copyright infringement. Selling counterfeit copies of copyrighted works can be considered an act of copyright infringement.

Copyright infringement offenses include the sale or distribution of counterfeit copies of copyrighted works. The punishment can include imprisonment for a minimum of 6 months, which can be extended up to 3 years, as well as fines that vary depending on the severity of the offence.

3. Indian Penal Code (IPC): Contains provisions related to forgery, cheating, and fraud, which may be applicable to counterfeiting offenses.

4. Customs Act, 1962, and Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007: Enable customs authorities to detain and seize suspected counterfeit goods at the Indian border.

In addition to this, several legal actions have been implemented worldwide against the consumers who engage in buying counterfeit goods:

Legal Consequences in Different Countries: Purchasing counterfeit goods is illegal in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Italy. Consumers who engage in such behaviour risk facing penalties, fines, and even imprisonment. These legal consequences act as deterrents, discouraging consumers from purchasing counterfeit goods.

Strict Regulations in Italy: Italy has implemented regulations that hold consumers liable for fines of up to 10,000 euros if found purchasing counterfeit goods. This stringent approach is intended to discourage consumers from participating in the counterfeit market.

India currently lacks specific legal provisions to address the issue of consumers intentionally purchasing counterfeit products, setting forth significant challenges in effectively controlling the manufacturing and distribution of knockoff and counterfeit items. Implementing stringent legal measures against such consumers is essential, as it would substantially curtail the demand and market for counterfeit goods. Taking legal action against both consumers and manufacturers serves as a powerful deterrent, safeguarding intellectual property rights and promoting a fair and legitimate marketplace. To effectively combat the production and purchase of counterfeit products, governments, and regulatory bodies must establish and enforce comprehensive legal provisions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature. Several research and surveys are conducted to draw the attention of Corporate, Government, and customers so that they are aware of these fake offerings.

Literature Review

1. Jain et al. (2017) : The author in this research paper conducted a study among Indian consumers on the consumption of luxury counterfeit products and discovered that subjective norms are the most influential factor in the motive of counterfeit luxury products. Indians buy luxury products to demonstrate their social identity and significant social status to society.
2. Rod et al. (2015): This study indicates that the main causes of the existence and expansion of counterfeit goods in the market are customer attitudes towards using them as a means of attaining social status and for economic gain.
3. Braithwaite, J. (2021): This author's research investigates the role of intermediaries, such as online platforms, in combating counterfeit products. It underlines the importance of coordination among stakeholders, such as governments, law enforcement, and online platforms, in order to successfully protect intellectual property rights and prevent counterfeiting in the online environment.
4. Jiang and Shan (2016): This research closely examines how consumers' brand awareness and face influence their tendency to buy knockoffs of well-known companies.

According to the results of their investigation, consumers who were more concerned with their appearance were more inclined to select luxury knockoffs than Shanzai products.

5. Hemphill and Suk (2019): The authors in this research focused on legal instruments that brand owners can employ to safeguard their intellectual property rights and retain brand integrity in the face of counterfeiting. It investigates trademark law, consumer protection legislation, and the role of online platforms in combating counterfeits, suggesting viable legal tactics for brand owners.

6. Svensson and Larsson (2021): This study examines the European Union's (EU) measures to combat counterfeit trade. It investigates legislative measures, enforcement actions, and collaborative ways within the EU to address the issues posed by counterfeiting, including the development of specialist agencies and cross-border cooperation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The global prevalence of knockoff and counterfeit products is on the rise, presenting significant challenges for consumers. The intentional and unintentional purchase of such items has become widespread. Consumers intentionally choose knockoffs for their lower prices, affordability, and trendy appeal, often disregarding concerns about quality and safety. Encouraging consumers to veer away from these products necessitates emphasizing the advantages of authentic purchases. Moreover, many consumers unknowingly buy counterfeit products, unable to distinguish them from genuine ones. This lack of awareness not only undermines the exclusivity of authentic brands but also affects genuine buyers. Despite common beliefs regarding identifying counterfeits, many are so convincingly replicated that even the brands themselves struggle to discern the difference. Given this scenario, it is crucial to investigate consumer awareness of knockoff and counterfeit products and explore available remedies for those who unknowingly possess such items.

RESEARCH GAP AND LIMITATIONS

This study reveals a significant research gap concerning counterfeit product purchase in Kanchipuram, India, necessitating further exploration. Valuable insights and caution must be exercised in generalizing findings to other regions due to potential cultural variations. Additionally, the study acknowledges the presence of response bias in the questionnaire data,

which can influence the accuracy of the results. Moreover, the impact on brand manufacturers, including financial losses and reputational damage, remains understudied. Addressing these limitations will enhance our understanding of consumer behaviour towards counterfeit products in Kanchipuram and enable the development of effective strategies to combat this issue.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the attitude of consumers concerning product knockoffs or counterfeits.
2. To analyse the detection and non-detection of product knockoff or counterfeit by consumers.
3. To study the effectiveness of measures taken by the various sectors to combat product knockoffs and counterfeiting.
4. To suggest remedial measures to the consumers, in case of knockoff or counterfeits.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is quantitative research, and this chapter describes the methodologies utilized in data collection and analysis that are essential to the research. The methodologies will include topics such as research area, study area, sample size, sample technique, and so on.

Research Design

Using a descriptive research design, this study was conducted. Broadly, this study follows a descriptive research design covering the consumers in Kanchipuram.

Area of The Study

The study is limited to the population residing in various areas in Kanchipuram, situated in Tamil Nadu, India. The survey covering 92 respondents in various Occupations, Educational statuses, Age & Sex is to be conducted in Kanchipuram.

Sample Size

The sample size of the present study is 92 comprising 51 from Urban Areas, 20 from Rural

Areas, 17 from Semi-Urban Areas, and 4 from Semi-Rural.

Sampling Technique

In this research, non-probability sampling was used. The kind of non-probability sampling that was selected to collect the sample is convenience sampling. The sampling frame for the current study was based on customers' socio-economic variables such as gender, age, education qualification, occupation, monthly income, and residential area.

Sources

For research, both primary and secondary data are to be used. Primary data are to be collected with the help of a questionnaire through Google Forms. For the same, a web-based survey was conducted of 92 respondents through a structured questionnaire based in Kanchipuram, India. Whereas secondary data are to be collected through reports given in journals, internet articles, and reports on various websites.

Tools for Analysis

The statistical tools to be used in data analysis include Tabulation, Percentages, Frequency Distribution, and Likert's Five Points Scale. The study uses IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 statistical software packages to analyse data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, the analysis of the collected data has been discussed and hence some meaningful results have been drawn out towards the end of every discussion. Every discussion is supported with appropriate tables and graphs to depict the results in a better way. The statistical tools to be used in data analysis include Tabulation, Percentages, Frequency Distribution, Mean, Likert Point Scale, Chi-square Test and Coefficient of contingency. The study uses IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 statistical software packages to analyse data.

4.1 Personal Profile

Before discussing the influence of product knockoffs or counterfeits on consumers, it is essential to have an overview of their socio-economic characteristics as the socio-economic

characteristics may have a direct or indirect bearing on their behaviour.

4.1.1 Gender

Table- 4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	61	66.3%
Female	31	33.7%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

After perusing Table 4.1.1, it becomes evident that the entire sample consisted of 66.3% male respondents, while female respondents accounted for 33.7%.

4.1.2 Age

Table- 4.1.2 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	2	2.2%
18 to 25	77	83.7%
26 to 33	7	7.6%

34 to 41	5	5.4%
Above 42	1	1.1%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

The data presented in Table 1.2 clearly illustrates that out of the 92 respondents, 77 (83.7%) were within the age group of 18 to 25 years, 7 (7.6%) belonged to the age group of 26 to 33 years, 5 (5.4%) were in the age group of 34 to 41, 2 (2.2%) were below 18 years old, and 1 (1.1%) was above the age of 42 years.

4.1.3 Educational Qualification

Table- 4.1.3: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Educational Qualification

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	2	2.2%
18 to 25	77	83.7%
26 to 33	7	7.6%
34 to 41	5	5.4%
Above 42	1	1.1%

Total	92	100%
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Source: Questionnaire

After examining Table 4.1.3, it becomes evident that out of the 92 respondents, 65 (70.7%) were Undergraduates, 15 (16.3%) were Postgraduates, 6 (6.5%) were pursuing Diploma programs, 5 (5.4%) belonged to other categories, and 1 (1.1%) enrolled in a Doctoral Degree program.

4.1.4 Occupation

Table- 4.1.4 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Government Sector	4	4.3%
Private Sector	43	46.7%
Business	3	3.3%
Entrepreneur	2	2.2%
Others	40	43.5%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

A careful examination of Table 4.1.4 reveals that out of the 92 respondents, 43 (46.7%) were employed in the Private Sector, 4 (4.3%) were working in the Government Sector, 3 (3.3%) were involved in Business, 2 (2.2%) identified as Entrepreneurs, and 40 (43.5%) were categorized under other occupations.

4.1.5 Residential Area

Table- 4.1.5 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Residential Area

Residential Area	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	51	55.4%
Rural	20	21.7%
Semi Urban	17	18.5%
Semi-Rural	4	4.3%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

An analysis of Table 4.1.5 indicates that out of the 92 respondents, 51 (55.4%) resided in Urban Areas, 20 (21.7%) hailed from Rural Areas, 17 (18.5%) were from Semi-Urban Areas, and 4 (4.3%) belonged to Semi-Rural areas.

4.2 Influence of Product Knockoffs or Counterfeits with Respect to The Consumers

4.2.1 When Buying Products, I Prefer Brands

Table- 4.2.1 Brand Consideration While Purchasing Products

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Likert Value	Likert Score
Strongly Agree	24	26.1%	2	48
Agree	37	40.2%	1	37
Neutral	24	26.1%	0	0
Disagree	6	6.5%	-1	-6
Strongly Disagree	1	1.1%	-2	-2
Total	92	100%	77	
Likert Mean Score = 0.836 (77/92)				

Source: Questionnaire

Brands are a crucial factor in purchasing decisions, as evidenced by respondents' reactions (Table 4.2.1). Out of 60 participants, 26.1% strongly agreed, and 40.2% agreed that they consider brands when making purchases. 26.1% were neutral, 1.1% strongly disagreed, and 6.5% disagreed. In total, 66.3% either strongly agreed or agreed that brands influence their purchase choices. The Likert mean score of 0.836 further supports the significance of brands in purchase decisions.

4.2.2 Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious Items Appeal to Me Most

Table- 4.2.2 Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits, and Spurious Items Appeal to Me Most

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Likert Value	Likert Score
Strongly Agree	8	8.7%	2	16
Agree	36	39.1%	1	36
Neutral	23	25.0%	0	0
Disagree	19	20.7%	-1	-19
Strongly Disagree	6	6.5%	-2	-12
Total	92	100%		21
Likert Mean Score = 0.228 (21/92)				

Source: Questionnaire

Consumer categories vary in their preference for knockoff and counterfeit products. According to responses (Table 4.2.2), out of 92 respondents, 47.8% either strongly agree or agree that they find appeal in fakes, knockoffs, counterfeits, and spurious items, while 27.2% strongly disagree or disagree. The Likert mean score of 0.228 indicates a neutral result.

4.2.3 Are You Able to Detect Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious?

Table-4.2.3 Detection of Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	52.2%
No	10	10.9%
Maybe	34	37.0%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

Awareness of fakes, knockoffs, counterfeits, and spurious products has become essential in our day-to-day lives. Based on Table 4.2.3, 48 out of 92 respondents (52.2%) demonstrated awareness of these items, highlighting that respondents are indeed conscious of the prevalence of knockoffs and counterfeits in the market.

4.2.4 If Detect, Then Tick the Reasons That Make It Possible

Table- 4.2.4 Reasons for Detection of Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious

Reasons for Detection	Out of 92 Respondents	Percentage
Significant Actions initiated by government	25	29.8%

Corporate actions such as labelling, packaging and publicizing etc are significant	49	58.3%
Retailer's assistance as seller is Faithfull	13	15.7%
With the help of friends, relatives and society	40	47.6%
Legal provisions and remedies available for redressal are significant.	7	8.4%

Source: Questionnaire

Out of 92 respondents, 48 were able to detect fakes, knockoffs, counterfeits, and spurious products. According to Table 4.2.4, 58.3% attributed detection to corporate actions, 47.6% to assistance from friends and society, and 29.8% to government actions. However, only 15.7% had faith in their retailers, and 8.4% considered legal provisions significant. Improving retailer engagement and legal actions can enhance respondents' ability to detect fakes.

4.2.5 If Not Able to Detect, Then Tick the Reasons You Think Responsible for Non-Detection

Table- 4.2.5 Reasons for Non-Detection of Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious

Reasons for non-detection	Out of 92 Respondents	Percentage
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Actions initiated by Corporate are not sufficient and insignificant	16	25%
Actions initiated by Government are not sufficient and insignificant.	22	34.4%
Packaging & Labelling of counterfeit products are exact to genuine	23	35.9%
Lack of proper support from Retailer or Seller	20	31.3%
Legal Provisions and remedies available for redressal are not significant	7	8.3%

Source: Questionnaire

When respondents were asked about reasons for non-detection (Table 4.2.5), 7 out of 92 (7.6%) cited insignificant legal provisions, 16 (17.4%) believed corporate actions were ineffective, and 20 (21.7%) mentioned a lack of retailer support. The main concern was that 23 (25%) struggled due to near identical packaging and labelling, and 22 (23.9%) felt government actions were insufficient. Improving packaging, labelling, and government actions is crucial for the effective detection of fakes.

4.2.6 If Purchased Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious, Do You Lodge Complaints Against Such Offerings to Proper Authorities?

Table- 4.2.6 Respondent Complaint Against Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious In Case of Purchase

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	50%
No	23	25%
Maybe	23	25%
Total	92	100%

Source: Questionnaire

Out of the 92 respondents, 23 individuals (25%) chose not to lodge any complaints against fakes, knockoffs, and counterfeits to any authority. However, a significant majority of 46 respondents (50%) reported making complaints against such products to the competent authorities. This highlights that the respondents were well aware of the importance of filing complaints with the appropriate authorities when encountering counterfeit items during their purchases.

4.2.7 In the Event That Complaints Have Been Lodged, I Have Received A Satisfactory Response from The Appropriate Authorities

Table- 4.2.7 Satisfactory Response in Case of Complaint to Appropriate Authorities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Likert Value	Likert Score
Strongly Agree	6	7.3%	2	12
Agree	28	34.1%	1	28
Neutral	36	43.9%	0	0
Disagree	9	11%	-1	-9
Strongly Disagree	3	3.7%	-2	1
Totally responded to this question	82	100%	32	
Likert Mean Score = 0.39 (32/82)				

Source: Questionnaire

Based on the data in Table 4.2.7, respondents' opinions on receiving satisfactory responses from appropriate authorities when lodging complaints vary. Out of 82 respondents, 6 (7.3%) strongly agree and 28 (34.1%) agree with receiving satisfactory responses. Conversely, 3 (3.7%) strongly disagree and 9 (11%) disagree. The majority, 36 (43.9%), are neutral, implying inconsistent experiences with satisfactory responses. The Likert mean score of 0.39 further supports the neutral result, indicating no clear consensus on satisfaction when reporting complaints against counterfeit products to authorities.

4.2.8 What Are the Reasons for Not Lodging Complaints with Competent Authorities?

Table- 4.2.8 Reasons for Not Lodging Complaints

Reasons for Not Lodging Complaints	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of proper legal provisions to check such offerings	21	24.4%
Lack of knowledge about relevant laws framed to protect the interest of consumers from fakes	35	40.7%
Expectation of Unsatisfactory response	24	27.9%
Loss not significant	6	7%
Total 86 responded to this question	86	100%

Source: Questionnaire

Out of 92 respondents, 23 did not lodge complaints to any authorities, and 23 were unsure about lodging complaints (Table 2.8). Reasons for not complaining include: 40.7% lack

knowledge about legal provisions and the redressal system, 27.8% doubt satisfactory responses from authorities, 24.4% find legal provisions insignificant, and 7% consider their losses not significant. To encourage complaints, consumers need more awareness about legal provisions and redressal systems and assurance of satisfactory responses.

4.2.9 In Which of The Popular Product Categories You Observed Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits and Spurious,

Table 4.2.9 Fakes Observed in Popular Categories

Products	OUT OF 60 RESPONSES	Percentage
FMCGs (soap, detergent, cosmetics, powder etc.)	26	43.3%
Pharma Products	8	13.3%
Packaged food & Beverages	24	40%
Auto Components	11	18.3%
Alcohol & Tobacco	11	18.3%
Computer Hardware & Software	21	35%

Mobile Phones & Gadgets	30	50%
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Source: Questionnaire

Based on the data in Table 4.2.9, fakes, knockoffs, and counterfeits were most commonly observed in the following categories: Mobile Phones & Gadgets (50%), FMCGs (soap, detergent, cosmetics, powder, etc.) (43.3%), Packaged food & Beverages (40%), Computer Hardware & Software (35%), Auto Components (18.3%), Alcohol & Tobacco (18.3%), and Pharma Products (13.3%). Notably, mobile phones and gadgets stood out as the category with the highest occurrence of fakes, accounting for 50% of the cases.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Results

Personal Profile

The study surveyed a total of 92 respondents to analyse their socioeconomic characteristics.

- **Gender:** The sample is composed of 66.3% male respondents and 33.7% female respondents. (Table 4.1.1)
- **Age:** The majority of respondents 83.7% fell within the age group of 18 to 25 years, indicating that young adults constituted a significant proportion of the sample. (Table 4.1.2)
- **Educational Qualification:** 70.7% of the respondents were undergraduates, followed by 16.3% postgraduates, reflecting a higher representation of students in the study. (Table 4.1.3)
- **Occupation:** 46.7% of the respondents were employed in the Private Sector, while others were distributed across various occupations. (Table 4.1.4)
- **Residential Area:** The majority of respondents (55.4%) resided in urban areas,

suggesting an urban-centric sample. (Table 4.1.5)

Influence of Product Knockoffs or Counterfeits on Consumers

The study aimed to understand the impact of product knockoffs and counterfeits on consumer behaviour and decision-making.

- **Brand Consideration:** A significant proportion (66.3%) of respondents expressed a preference for branded products when making purchases, indicating the importance of brands in consumer choices. (Table 4.2.1)
- **Appeal of Fakes, Knockoffs, Counterfeits:** Nearly half of the respondents (47.8%) found appeal in fakes, knockoffs, counterfeits, and spurious items. This suggests a potential market for counterfeit products. (Table 4.2.2)
- **Detection of Counterfeit Products:** Over half of the respondents (52.2%) claimed to be able to detect fakes, knockoffs, counterfeits, and spurious items, demonstrating consumer awareness to some extent. (Table 4.2.3)
- **Factors for Detection:** Corporate actions, such as labelling and publicizing (58.3%), and assistance from friends and society (47.6%) were cited as significant factors contributing to the detection of counterfeit products. (Table 4.2.4)
- **Factors for Non-Detection:** The main reasons for non-detection were near identical packaging and labelling (35.9%) and insufficient government actions (34.4%), indicating challenges in identifying counterfeit products in the market. (Table 4.2.5)
- **Complaint Lodging:** Half of the respondents (50%) reported lodging complaints against fakes, knockoffs, and counterfeits to proper authorities, showing an inclination towards seeking legal redress for counterfeit purchases. (Table 4.2.6)
- **Satisfaction with Response:** The satisfaction level with responses from authorities after lodging complaints varied, with 34.1% reporting agreement, indicating room for improvement in the complaint resolution process. (Table 4.2.7)
- **Reasons for Not Lodging Complaints:** The primary reasons for not lodging complaints

included a lack of knowledge about relevant laws (40.7%) and the expectation of unsatisfactory responses (27.9%), highlighting the need for consumer awareness and confidence in the complaint process. (Table 4.2.8)

- Categories with Most Fakes: Mobile Phones & Gadgets (50%), FMCGs (43.3%), and Packaged food & Beverages (40%) were the popular categories where respondents observed fakes, indicating the prevalence of counterfeit products in these sectors. (Table 4.2.9)

CONCLUSION

There are various potential techniques to detect and eliminate knockoffs and counterfeits from the market. Such measures include ways of promoting awareness about knockoffs and counterfeits, strategies for detecting knockoffs and counterfeits, punishing and penalising counterfeiters, and encouraging customers to file complaints by addressing their knockoff and counterfeit-related questions most simply.

REGULATORY ACTIONS

- Government should take strict legal action against knockoff and counterfeit product manufacturers and retailers. This includes conducting investigations, imposing fines, and shutting down illegal operations to deter their continuation.
- Customers who report suppliers and dealers of knockoffs and counterfeits should be rewarded, encouraging active reporting to help authorities identify and prosecute offenders.
- Ensure easy access to customer service or complaint centres for consumers to report cases of purchasing counterfeit products, simplifying the complaint process and facilitating resolution.
- The government and relevant authorities should promptly respond to consumer complaints about knockoffs and counterfeits, conducting timely investigations and taking appropriate action to build consumer trust and prevent further illegal sales.
- Creating a dedicated committee or authority to identify and monitor knockoffs and

counterfeit products. This entity can collaborate with industry experts, law enforcement agencies, and intellectual property rights organizations to effectively combat the problem.

These regulatory actions can reduce knockoffs and counterfeits, protect consumer rights, and maintain market integrity. Collaboration between regulatory bodies, law enforcement, and consumers is essential to combat the production and sale of illegal goods.

SUGGESTIONS BY RESPONDENTS THROUGH SURVEY

- Acquire adequate knowledge about the brand or products before making a purchase.
- Increase brand awareness among consumers through social media campaigns and educate them to identify and differentiate spurious products.
- Implement security features like holographic labels, serial numbers, or other measures that make it difficult for counterfeiters to copy.
- Take legal action against counterfeiters and knockoff producers, including filing lawsuits, seizing counterfeit products, and cooperating with law enforcement agencies.
- Choose reputable retailers when making purchases.
- Verify products using QR codes or other authentication methods.
- Collaborate with regulatory agencies, industry organizations, and international bodies to identify and combat counterfeit products.
- Raise awareness among the public about the existence of counterfeit products and the importance of opting for branded products.

These essential suggestions emphasize the significance of consumer education, legal enforcement, and collaboration to combat counterfeit products effectively.

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