

1. Introduction

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Consumers' attitude toward purchase behaviour and purchase intention and their antecedents have been studied long enough in different market segments throughout the world. Since consumer behaviour, psychology, demand and values are the main components of each product and services, studying these variables have taken so much attention of the academic and market experts to win consumers over their competitors in the stiff competition of a globalized market. Globalization and its impact which makes the market and consumers homogeneous are irrefutable. The accessibility to communication channels and various mediums made the information to fly over the countries and continents in less than a day or even hours. The contribution of internet, TV, books, magazines, movies, international events and programs in spreading news, trends, fads have established a global market for any goods or products which have the potential to be known internationally. Fashion shows, celebrity events and famous talk-shows, international fairs and competitions are some channels for introducing a newly designed product or revealing a new trend of fashion to the consumer market.

Acceptance of a new trend in a market is dependent on some factors such as the country's infrastructure, culture, values, norms, level of income, religion and practiced life style to name a few. Meanwhile, it can be seen that an Asian teenager has relatively the same taste and lifestyle as an American or European teenager. A European working adult has more or less the same kind of purchasing behaviour as an American does.

Having a stylish life with accessibility to luxuries has been in the human's life for a long time. The evidences of luxuries were seen in the kings' reign and emperors' era when they stacked up the whole countries' reserves and treasure to live up a gigantic and extravagant life.

Living a luxury life by possessing various goods and products which bear very high price tags has been some sorts of a practice from the past and up to the current century. Having very expensive items which bear famous brands and logos, it is the main concern for some fraction of people in different societies. Bragging the wealth and possessions are practiced by showing off luxury lifestyle.

There are some parts of societies which can afford to live the way it is called luxury, while others cannot keep up with the trend and lose this so-called “who owns the most and the best” game very fast. The latter group either completely cannot afford to live the same way or if they do they don’t have the potential to keep up with the first group in all aspects. Therefore, they will try to fake it; they will purchase the fake brands and bogus products and pretend it to be genuine. By this consideration, purchasing counterfeit products and items have been an interesting topic for the past two decades and were studied long enough from both supply and demand side in different countries and different market segments.

On the other hand, there are some consumers who can afford a luxury life, have strong social status and are practicing it, but they aren’t showing off their wealth and affordability in purchasing an upscale brand or swanky item, so they are intended to purchase a quiet and discrete logo brands that people could hardly notice or recognize. On the opposite side, there are people who obtain loud and big logos to show off their possessions’ brands to the people around them and shout out loud that they can afford to buy such an expensive car, cloth or watch.

In this research it is tried to study consumer behaviour of these two final types of people and investigate the logic behind their preference and choice.

The logoed items are referring to the luxury brands and products which carry big logos and badges that can easily be seen and recognized by observers; hence it is termed as **“Loud Brand”**.

Meanwhile, non-logged items or brands are referring to the luxury products which their brands, logos or badges are not simply visible and noticeable; thereof it is termed as “**Quiet Brand**”.

1.1 Background Research

Nearly all previous researches in luxury shopping were focused on the counterfeiting for both supply and demand side. Consumers and their behaviour were studied to realize the reasons of purchasing bogus brands in different countries in the span of last two decades. Except the latest study of Han et al. (2010) which revealed that wealthy consumers who are in low need to show their status pay an elevated price for quiet brands, while affluent with high need of status cater themselves with loud luxury items, and finally the less well-off consumers who are high in need for status use loud counterfeit goods. Therefore, it drives the attention of researcher of this paper to undertake a research to know the reason of buying quiet and loud luxury brands in the context of Malaysia.

1.2. Problem Statement

By taking a look at the previous researches on counterfeiting, it can be seen that the demand and supply side have been researched good and long enough in different countries. It is good to refer to some examples of the counterfeiting works such as Grossman & Shapiro (1988a) on welfare analysis regarding the disposition of confiscated goods, Grossman & Shapiro (1988b) description of non-deceptive counterfeiting as a disaggregation of brand and product, McDonald & Roberts (1994) counterfeit trade as the satisfaction of market need, Green & Smith (2002) addressing counterfeit trade through the case of a corporation producing and selling alcoholic beverages, Bloch et al. (1993) study on the willingness to buy counterfeits, Wee et al. (1995) empirical study of purchase intention among 949 Asian students, Ang et al.

(2001) a survey with the focus on counterfeit music CDs among Singaporeans, Phau et al. (2001) purchasing counterfeit clothing in Hong Kong, Hung (2003) the roots of counterfeit trade in China, Wang et al. (2005) counterfeit purchase intentions in Chinese students.

Referring to the abovementioned literature, it can be seen that the reason for counterfeiting of products and the purchase intention of confiscated goods have been surveyed for the past two decades. Meanwhile, there are two recent studies which captures the researcher's attention; the studies of Wilcox, Kim, and Sen (2009) who find that products without logos are less apt to serve the social functions of self-expression and self-presentation and Han et al. (2010) exploring the desire of people in buying visible or invisible luxury branded goods. Han et al. (2010) concluded that consumers who crave less for status and have high income are seeking brands with less exposure and don't spend conspicuously, while consumers with high desire to seek status and are craving for conspicuous consumption will buy loud luxury brands.

The study of Han et al. (2010) identified the types of consumers who prefer loud versus quiet products and offers an explanation for these differences, while it also covered the counterfeit. Han et al. (2010) developed a taxonomy assigning consumers to one of four groups according to their wealth and need for status namely; Patrician, Parvenu, Proletarian, Poseur.

As it can be seen, the previous research was focused on the associate or dissociate manner of consumers in purchasing brands, while it was not focused merely on the purchase attitudes and intention of buying loud or quiet luxury brands.

In this manner, this paper is sets out to investigate how social and personality factors influence consumers attitudes towards luxury brands in Malaysia and how these two sets of variables influence purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury brands.

1.3. Research Objectives

As mentioned earlier and to the knowledge of the researcher, the purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury products has merely studied once in the world which was United States and obviously it's a new concept introduced by Han et al. (2010) study. Thereof, the purpose of this study is to investigate the consumer's intention and behaviour of buying quiet and loud luxury brands. This research strives to understand the purchase attitudes and motives of consumers in purchasing logoed luxury brands and non-logoed luxury brands.

The survey seeks out to discover consumers' mindset in Malaysia in relation to the quiet and loud luxury brands.

In a nutshell, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between "price knowledge" and "brand selection of quiet and loud luxury brands".
2. To examine the relationship between "social factors" and "purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury brands".
3. To study the relationship between "personality factors" and "purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury brands".
4. To scrutinize the relationship between "social and personality factors" and "purchase intention towards quiet and loud luxury brands".

1.4. Research Questions

This study is conducted to determine the perception, attitudes and intention of the Malaysian consumers toward branded products. In addition, it is carried out to enhance the understanding of the antecedents of the purchase of a quiet luxury brand and loud luxury brand. The research questions are as follows:

Q.1.What is the relationship between “price knowledge” and “brand selection of quiet and loud luxury brands”?

Q.2.What is the relationship between “social factors” and “purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury brands”?

This question attempts to investigate if there is any relationship between “social factors” and the “consumers’ intention in buying quiet and loud luxury brand”.

Q.3.What is the relationship between “personality factors” and “purchase intention of quiet and loud luxury brands”?

This question is to ascertain whether there is any relationship between “personality factors” and “purchase intention of logoed or non-logoed (loud or quiet) items”.

Q.4.What is the relationship between “social and personality factors” and “purchase intentions towards quiet and loud luxury brands” that leads to the buying decision?

This question primarily attempts to ascertain which of the studied variables of the social and personality factors mainly have strong impact on the purchase intention towards quiet and loud luxury brands that leads to the buying behavior of noticeable logoed product or discrete non-logoed items.

1.5. Research Scope

This research aims to discover the factors that influence the attitudes towards quiet and loud luxury brands which are believed to lead to the purchase behaviour. The study will be undertaken in the Malaysian market and naturally the respondents are Malaysia residents 18 years old and above. Eighteen years old has been selected as the edge because this age group has substantial spending power and are zealous about shopping.

1.6. Importance of the Study

Given that, there are very limited numbers of studies on investigating the purchasing decision of quiet and loud brands particularly in the luxury market (Han et al., 2010) the need for proposed study was observed.

The findings of this study could contribute to better understanding of consumers' attitudes and intention towards logoed or non-logoed items; wherein it is termed loud and quiet brands respectively, in the luxury market from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

From the theoretical perspective, this study provides an opportunity to determine whether Social Factors such as "Information Susceptibility, Normative Susceptibility, Collectivism" and Personality Factors such as "Personal Gratification, Status Consumption, Novelty Seeking and Brand Conscious" are responsible in the consumers' decision making of buying quiet or loud luxury brands. In addition, it enhances the understanding of the role of Malaysian culture and its residents' value and norms on purchasing high valued items.

This could provide a unique opportunity for scholars to understand the antecedents of consumers' buying decision of luxury brands in the context of Malaysia.

It also shed some light on understanding the consumers' need for social status, their desire for social gain and choice of the brand types they made in buying behaviour of luxury goods in Malaysia.

Simply put, it gives hands to the literature on whether Malaysian consumers are more likely to base their decision to select a product according to the visibility or invisibility of its logo when they are dealing with the purchase of an upscale luxury item.

On the other hand, from the practical perspective this research grants the brand owners with a unique chance to understand consumers' perception of logoed or non-logoed luxury brands to help them better understand Malaysian luxury market and the consumers' readiness in embracing the new products and goods with or without logo. This actually would contribute the luxury brand owners to know the characteristics of their buyers and set some strategies in targeting, attracting and retaining the existing or prospect consumers.

Overall, this study could assist the luxury brand owners in their decision making, whether they are choosing the medium of a newly launched products, selecting a new strategy in marketing and branding their existing products or learning their customers' preference in buying branded products; whether to increase the exposure of their logos for some number of customers, or reduce the size and notice-ability of their logos because of few loyal customers or if possible catering both segments with different strategies in order to maximizes the benefits for the firm, shoppers and the society as a whole.

1.7.Thesis Structure

In order to simplify the thesis structure, a detailed graphical structure is provided at the end of this chapter to better understand the flow of the study for the viewers. The same graphical structure with the emphasis on the content of each chapter is presented at the beginning of the following chapter to facilitate the upcoming sections and visualize the preview of what is covered in the particular section.

1.8. Summary

The above chapter provides an overview of the whole study. It consists of the background section in which some information is provided on purchasing behaviour of consumers of counterfeit and buying behaviour of the luxury brands being quiet or loud.

Furthermore, this chapter enlighten the theoretical gaps which were observed in prior works and established the need for this study to be conducted. The chapter is followed by elaborating on research objectives and research questions that have been raised and have been used to address the issues. Finally, the theoretical and practical contributions of this study for academicians and brand owners are explained.



