



Exploring the Factors Influencing South African Luxury Consumers' Purchase Decisions in Relation to Genuine and Counterfeit Luxury Goods

By

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ABSTRACT

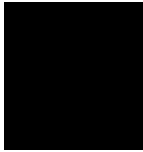
The research paper explores the factors influencing South African (SA) luxury consumers' purchase decisions in relation to genuine and counterfeit luxury goods. Counterfeiting is recognised as a growing global economic problem, driven in part by consumer demand (International Anti-Counterfeit Coalition, 2021). It is therefore important to understand the factors that may influence luxury consumers' purchase decisions with regards to genuine and counterfeit luxury goods. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) was used to understand how consumers make purchase decisions in light of their attitudes, social norms and perceived ease or difficulty in performing the desired purchase. The small-scale qualitative study obtained a sample of four SA luxury consumers with counterfeit purchase experiences. A semi-structured, one-on-one interview approach was implemented to gather data from the sample group. Following a thematic analysis, findings indicated that participants' counterfeit luxury purchases were influenced by social norms of status and superiority, social recognition, novelty seeking attitudes, and easy access and affordability of goods. While their genuine luxury purchases were influenced by social norms relating to status, superiority and social recognition, attitudes relating to personal gratification, self-representation and integrity, and the goods' timelessness, durability, quality, uniqueness and accessibility. Results from the research are of significance to established luxury brands threatened by the counterfeit market, and suggests that genuine luxury goods be marketed to provide the benefit of timelessness, durability, and high quality. Additionally, findings imply that further research on is required to understand how luxury goods can maintain their uniqueness and scarcity, whilst also maintaining their premium prices, to lessen the threat of counterfeits.

Key words: Luxury goods, counterfeit luxury goods, consumer attitudes, purchase decisions

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the BA Hons Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signed:



Date: 29/11/2021

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic and provides context and rationalisation. The research problem and purpose are defined, followed by research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2 addresses theoretical foundations relating to the research topic, as well as previous literature and conceptualisation of key concepts.

Chapter 3 details the research design and methodology, including an outline of the research paradigm and approach. Population and sampling methods have been specified, followed by a description of data collection and analysis methods. Lastly, the trustworthiness of the study has been discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings and interpretations thereof.

Chapter 5 concludes the report by indicating how the study addressed the research question and objectives. Implications for further research are highlighted, followed by limitations, recommendations, and ethical considerations. Finally, the significance of the findings is addressed.

1.1. Title

Exploring the Factors Influencing SA Luxury Consumers' Purchase Decisions in Relation to Genuine and Counterfeit Luxury Goods.

1.2. Contextualisation

Counterfeiting is recognised as a growing global economic problem, driven in part by consumer demand (International Anti-Counterfeit Coalition, 2021). They are generally made from lower quality resources and sold as cheap imitations of similar goods produced by established brands that consumers know and trust (According to the Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition, 2021). Thus, counterfeits are produced and sold to appear to be manufactured by established and authentic brands. However, when making purchase decisions consumers can often distinguish counterfeit goods from originals due to their significantly lower price. This can be attributable to the demand for counterfeit goods amongst consumers who seek to spend less money. According to Sularia (2020), the trade of counterfeit goods has risen over recent years and accounts for 3.3% of global trade, threatening established brands.

The luxury brand market is one industry highly affected by counterfeiting (Cademan, Hendriksson & Nyqvist, 2012). Pham and Nasir (2016) argue that consumers' desire to purchase fashion goods because of the label or brand name – conspicuous consumption and materialism – lends to luxury brands being targeted by counterfeit traders. Furthermore, luxury brands are deemed as desirable and exclusive because of their scarcity and uniqueness (Sharda & Bhat, 2018). However, the scale of the counterfeit luxury market is a threat to those established and authentic luxury brands. In this way, the counterfeit luxury brand market in SA is of interest to this study. Cademan, et al. (2012) argue that counterfeit luxury goods make it possible for anyone to be a “luxury brand user”, going against the core of luxury – which strives for a low distribution to keep the demand high, maintaining consumer associations and expectations of luxury brands. Luxury consumers have high purchasing power and, according to Aysuna and Usulu (2014), even these consumers may prefer to purchase counterfeits for less. This points to the need to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behaviours and perceptions towards the counterfeit luxury market.

Consumer purchase behaviours can be explained and determined by their attitudes and subjective norms. Therefore, understanding SA luxury consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards the counterfeit luxury market will shed light on the global economic problem, and assist brands and marketers in getting closer to overcoming the issue. This study attempts to understand the factors influencing SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions in relation to genuine and counterfeit luxury goods and how the counterfeit luxury market affects their luxury purchase decisions.

1.3. Rationale

The researcher has noticed a trend towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods amongst consumers who have the means to pay premium prices for genuine luxury goods. This can be supported by Aysuna and Uslu (2014), who have found that some luxury consumers may prefer to purchase counterfeits for less. It is understood that established brands are becoming increasingly threatened by the counterfeit market (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, Basu, & Lee, 2015; Shunmugam, 2015; Purwanto, Margiati, Kuswandi & Prasetyo, 2019; Junejo, Muhammad, Ali, Qureshi & Shaikh, 2020; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021). Thus, consumer behaviour towards counterfeit goods is an area of interest to the researcher. Moreover, previous research on the topic looks broadly at factors underlying consumer demand for counterfeit products. According to Basu, et al. (2015) in general, consumers purchase counterfeit luxury goods to meet their status needs when they do not have the means to pay premium prices. However, in relation to luxury consumers, there is a lack of understanding on how their purchase decisions are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market. Therefore, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the counterfeit luxury market from the perspective of luxury consumers to understand how their purchase behaviours are influenced by such. Furthermore, gaining insight on this topic, will aid in broadening the body of knowledge on luxury consumer behaviour and understanding what compels these individuals to pay premium prices.

There is also a gap in knowledge regarding luxury consumers in SA and the counterfeit luxury market. To the best of the researcher's knowledge there is only one study identifying factors underlying the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods in SA (Shunmugam, 2015). Thus, there is need for more information on the topic in the

context of SA. Understanding the factors that influence consumers' purchase decisions will better equip luxury brands and organizations to meet consumers' needs and expectations. Filling the gap in knowledge on SA luxury consumers' perspectives of counterfeit luxury goods and their purchase behaviours will provide brands and businesses with information to improve business, brand, and marketing activities. Moreover, this study aims to provide insight for further research on the topic of counterfeit luxury goods and their influence on consumers' purchase decisions.

1.4. Problem Statement

Established luxury brands are at risk of losing market share due to the growing issue of counterfeiting. Previous research on the topic highlights that consumers purchase counterfeit luxury goods when they don't have the financial means to purchase genuine luxury goods (Cant, Wiid & Manley, 2014; Purwanto, et al., 2019). In relation to SA luxury consumers however, there is a lack of understanding of the counterfeit market from the perspective of these individuals, and the factors that influence their purchase decisions. Therefore, addressing this gap in research and gaining insight into the purchase decisions of SA luxury consumers is of significance.

1.5. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore and gain a deeper understanding of SA luxury consumers' purchase behaviours and the factors that influence them when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. Using a qualitative research design, the researcher attempts to understand their attitudes towards and perceptions of counterfeit luxury goods, how they make purchase decisions and how they are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market when making purchase decisions.

1.6. Research Questions

Primary question:

What are the factors that influence SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?

Secondary questions:

- What are SA luxury consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?
- How do SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?
- How does the counterfeit luxury market influence SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions?

1.7. Research Objectives

Primary objective:

To gain insight on what influences SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods.

Secondary objectives:

- To gain insight and understand the attitudes and perceptions of SA luxury consumers towards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods.
- To gain insight and understand how SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods.
- To investigate and understand how the counterfeit luxury market in SA influences SA luxury consumer purchase decisions.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides grounds for the theoretical underpinnings relevant to this study. Followed by a review of previous literature on the topic of counterfeiting and luxury brands, as well as conceptualisation of key concepts relevant to the research.

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

2.1.1. Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), can be widely applied to predict deliberate human behaviour, and explains how the behaviour of people can change (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). TPB is therefore useful in understanding consumer behaviour and is applied to the study to assess luxury consumers purchase intentions. Ajzen (1991) suggests that an individual's intention to perform a particular behaviour plays a key role in their actual behaviour. Moreover, TPB demonstrates that future behaviours can be determined by the intention to perform a certain behaviour (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Behavioural intention is influenced three key factors: attitude towards the specific behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Figure 1 visually depicts the various aspects of TPB.

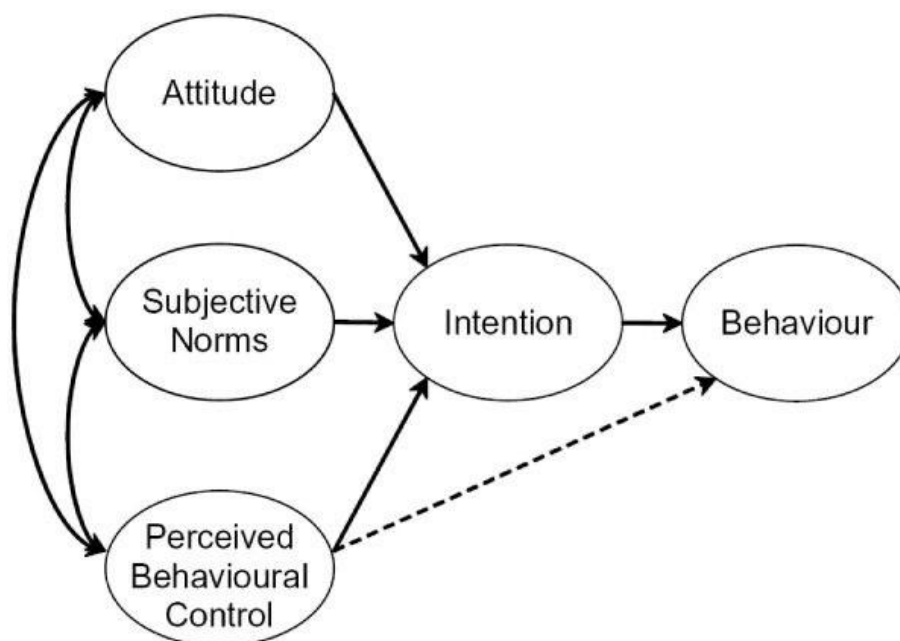


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

The theory posits that individuals are more likely to engage in certain activities if they believe the outcome will be as expected (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Attitude towards a behaviour is an aggregate of the beliefs that the behaviour will result in certain outcomes and the evaluation of those outcomes and involves the individuals' favourable or unfavourable evaluation of performing the behaviour in question (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). According to Tseng, Chiu and Leng (2020) if luxury consumers' attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods are favourable, they are more likely to engage in counterfeit purchases. On the other hand, if luxury consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit luxury goods are unfavourable, they are less likely to engage in such purchases. In relation to the study, favourable and unfavourable consumer attitudes are identified and evaluated to better understand their purchase behaviours and how they are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market.

The second factor influencing behavioural intention is subjective norms, which is determined by normative beliefs and the motivation to comply with specific referents (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). This refers to the individual's perceived social pressure from significant groups, and whether they believe the behaviour to be condonable or not (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). In relation to the study, luxury consumers may be more inclined to purchase counterfeits if it is deemed acceptable amongst social groups. However, others' normative beliefs may contradict purchasing counterfeit goods, thus these consumers might be less inclined to engage in counterfeit purchases.

Consumers' intentions towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods may also be influenced by factors other than attitudes and subjective norms. TPB highlights the construct of perceived behavioural control as a factor influencing consumers' intention to purchase counterfeits (Dhingra & Bhatia, 2014). According to Kan and Fabrigar (2017) perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest. If an individual's opportunities and resources to purchase counterfeit luxury goods increases the more likely the consumer will engage in purchasing counterfeit goods. To add to this, if a consumer has purchased counterfeits in the past, they are more likely to repeat the behaviour if they found it to be an easy experience. For instance, if counterfeit goods are easily accessible to consumers, they might find the purchasing experience effortless and easy, and are more likely to engage in future purchases alike.

TPB is used to gain a deeper understanding of luxury consumers' behaviour and how their attitudes toward purchasing counterfeit luxury goods, together with subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control determines their purchase intentions and consequently their purchase decisions. The researcher aims to explore luxury consumers' attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods to understand how the phenomenon influences their purchase decisions.

TPB provides an appropriate theoretical foundation to this study as it will help uncover the behavioural intentions of luxury consumers, in terms of their purchase behaviours and the factors that influence them. Furthermore, TPB helps determine the relationship between luxury consumers' attitudes purchase patterns and their willingness to purchase counterfeit luxury goods. Thus, the theory is integral to understanding how luxury consumers are influenced by counterfeit luxury goods and how this affects their purchase decisions.

2.1.2. Theory of Conspicuous Consumption

The concept of conspicuous consumption was first coined by Veblen (1899) and refers to the consumption of goods or services for the specific purpose of displaying one's wealth (Kenton, 2021). The theory has been used to explain the role of consumption in modern society's obsession with material possessions, and the act of displaying ostentatious wealth to obtain status and reputation in society (Edgell, 1999). Moreover, it has been frequently used in research relating to luxury brand consumption and the counterfeit market (Wilcox, Kim & Sen, 2009; Basu, et al., 2015; Shunmugam, 2015; Pham & Nasir, 2016; Jiang, Gao & Shi, 2018; Purwanto, et al., 2019; Khan, Fazili & Bashir, 2020), thereby making the theory appropriate to this study.

Veblen (1899) suggests that there are two types of commodities: "useful commodities" which are essential to sustaining human life; and "wasteful commodities" which are essential to sustaining social standing (Edgell, 1999). Veblen uses the term "waste" to refer to excessive commodities that aren't necessarily needed to survive (Phillips, n.d). The theory posits that lower class individuals engage in "useful" consumption, while upper class individuals engage in "wasteful", or luxurious, consumption of goods (Edgell, 1999). Furthermore, there is heightened competition for social status amongst

upper class communities; and a major way of indicating social status in modern societies is pecuniary and takes the form of conspicuous consumption of goods and services (Edgell, 1999). The ownership and display of luxury brand fashion items are one way of indicating “pecuniary strength”. Moreover, consumers purchase luxury fashion items for several reasons. According to Kapferer (2014, cited in Pham & Nasir, 2016) individuals define the high status in society through the procurement of luxury goods. Luxury goods also link to psychological values, as people in the upper-class desire to distinguish themselves from those in lower classes (Veblen, 1899, cited in Pham & Nasir, 2016); and owning luxury fashion items also nurturers one’s identity and self-image (Hudders, Pandelaere, & Vyncke, 2013, cited in Pham & Nasir, 2016). However, if consumers purchase luxury brand fashion items for these reasons it can be questioned whether counterfeit luxury goods can serve these needs.

According to Veblen (1899), there is direct relationship between an individual’s material possessions and their status in society. Conspicuous consumption involves the idea that expensive, rare, and highly visible commodities are obtained for social purposes rather than for functionality (Edgell, 1999). In exploring SA luxury consumers’ behaviours, attitudes, and perspectives towards the counterfeit luxury market the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption is used to understand the various factors relating to status consumption and luxury consumers’ desire to acquire visibly branded luxury fashion items.

2.2. Review of Previous Literature

Counterfeiting of luxury brand products is recognised as a global economic problem, posing threats to established luxury brands (Cant, Wiid & Manley, 2014; Purwanto, et al., 2019). The scale of the counterfeit market points to consumer demand for such products, suggesting that consumers' purchase intentions and behaviours are influenced by the counterfeit market (Sonmez, Yang & Fryxell, 2012, cited in Pham & Nasir, 2016). Several studies identify various factors underlying the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods (Wilcox, et al., 2009; Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, Basu, & Lee, 2015; Purwanto, et al., 2019; Junejo, Muhammad, Ali, Qureshi & Shaikh, 2020; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021), with only one relevant to a South African context (Shunmugam, 2015). Previous literature on the topic offers a broad understanding of the various factors underlying the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods, pointing to the need for a more in-depth understanding from the perspectives of SA luxury consumers. The following provides a review of previous literature on the topic of counterfeit luxury goods and identifies the various factors influencing consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In accordance with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), these factors determine consumers' purchase intentions and consequently their purchase behaviours. Additionally, purchasing authentic and counterfeit luxury goods relates to conspicuous consumption and materialism. These factors will be reviewed in terms of the literature and the relevant theories.

Counterfeiting of Luxury Brands

The global economic problem of counterfeiting compromises established brands and market dynamics. Several studies emphasize the threat of counterfeit goods on established brands (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015; Shunmugam, 2015; Purwanto, et al., 2019; Junejo, et al., 2020; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021), highlighting the need for a deeper understand of the issue. According to Aysuna and Uslu (2014), the demand for counterfeits is increasing; and organisations that have original brands as their most important asset are at risk of losing to counterfeits. Luxury brand products are largely successful for their brand name and what their image represents, making counterfeit products a significant threat to the industry. Sonmez et al. (2021, cited in Pham & Nasir, 2016) argue that the presence of counterfeits in the luxury fashion

market diminishes the rarity of luxury fashion goods which impacts consumers' purchase decisions. Furthermore, luxury fashion brands not only compete with other luxury fashion brands, but also with counterfeit manufacturers (Pham & Nasir, 2016). Thus, there is a need to better understand this market, and its impact on consumers' behaviours.

According to Shunmugam (2015) if a luxury brand is popular and advertised to represent high social status and image, it is at risk of being counterfeited. It could then be argued that the nature of luxury brands is the very cause of their own counterfeits. However, the problem of counterfeiting is growing year by year (International Anti-Counterfeit Coalition, 2021), pointing to the issue of increased consumer demands for such products. It is therefore important to gain a deep understanding of the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions regarding the counterfeit market.

Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions Towards Counterfeit Luxury Goods

According to Stravinskiene, Dovaliene and Ambrazeviciute (2013), consumer purchase decisions are influenced by external factors – product, price, place, and luxury goods' advertisement – as well as internal personal factors relating to social, cultural, and situational particulars of a consumer.

Shunmugam (2015) found that consumers' past purchase of counterfeit goods has a significant influence on future counterfeit purchase intentions and suggests that if the consumer had a positive experience purchasing counterfeit products in the past, the individual is more likely to purchase counterfeits in the future. This can be supported by the Ajzen's (1991) TPB, which suggests that past behaviours determine attitudes towards future behaviours. This is relevant to the current study, as the researcher aims to investigate luxury consumers who have engaged in counterfeit purchases. However, there is lack of understanding as to why such consumers purchase counterfeits in the first place, and how their purchase behaviours are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market.

Previous studies have indicated that motivations to purchase counterfeit luxury products involve individual characteristics and internal factors (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Shunmugam, 2015; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021), social motivations (Wilcox, et al., 2009; Basu, et al., 2015; Purwanto, et al., 2019), consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Shunmugam, 2015; Junejo, et al., 2020), and past purchase behaviours (Shunmugam, 2015; Basu, et al., 2015; Junejo, et al., 2020). Furthermore, Basu, et al. (2015) suggest that consumers today are generally looking for ways to save money resulting in them opting for cheaper counterfeit luxury goods to meet their status needs. According to TPB (Ajzen, 1991) an individual's actual behaviour is determined by their intentions, which considers their attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms (or social motivations), and their degree of perceived behavioural control – which relates to the perceived ease in which the desired outcome can be achieved.

Consumer Attitudes Towards Counterfeit Luxury Goods

Previous studies show that consumers' attitudes towards counterfeit luxury goods influence consumers' purchase intentions. According to Junejo, et al. (2020) novelty seeking, social influence and status consumption are factors influencing attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. According to Veblen's (1889) Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, there is direct relationship between an individual's material possessions and their status in society. Thus, individuals might be inclined to purchase counterfeit goods if doing so meets their social needs (social motivation). The study by Junejo, et al. (2020) found that students purchase counterfeits predominantly for social concern, with the pursuit of acceptance in their social circles. However, it is noted that students have less purchasing power, thus pointing to the gap in knowledge regarding consumers with higher purchasing power – luxury consumers – and if they purchase counterfeits for social concern.

Previous research indicates that social aspects are key influences in consumers' intentions to purchase counterfeit luxury goods (Wilcox, et al., 2009; Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015). According to Aysuna and Uslu (2014), consumers who feel the need to keep up with social trends related to fashion are more willing to purchase counterfeit luxury items. Counterfeits are more appealing to these consumers as they allow them to reach their social and status goals without paying premium prices.

According to theory related to conspicuous consumption, individuals compete for social hierarchy through the ostentatious display of wealth. It can be argued that this can be achieved through counterfeit luxury goods, without premium prices. Furthermore Basu, et al (2015), suggests that social recognition is more responsible for driving the purchase of counterfeit goods than that of social influence. Moreover Shunmugam (2015), highlights that those purchases based on social recognition involve materialistic behaviours.

Materialism is a recurring concept in literature on consumer behavior and authentic and counterfeit luxury goods. Materialistic consumers will be more inclined to purchase counterfeits because they are interested in material possessions and the desire to impress others with the image of prestige (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014). Obtaining and displaying material possessions is often performed by individuals in the upper-class, as they feel the need to survive socially through conspicuous consumption of goods. (Edgell, 1999). However, a South African study found that consumers' intention to purchase counterfeits is not attributed to materialism (Shunmugam, 2015). Thus, further research is necessary to explore possible motivations to purchase counterfeits. Moreover, there is a need for further research related to South African consumers and materialistic behaviours associated with counterfeit luxury products.

Aysuna & Uslu (2014), found that consumers who purchase goods for status opt not to purchase counterfeits as they feel they don't accurately reflect their identities and status in society (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014). This is supported by Basu et al. (2015) who found that consumers who are more status conscious are less likely to purchase counterfeits. The same study also found that consumers who are 'brand conscious' as well as those who are status conscious are not willing to purchase counterfeits (Basu, et al, 2015). Furthermore, if an individual believes that a particular commodity is a means of self-representation then they are less likely to purchase counterfeit goods. The study also suggests that counterfeits are perceived as substandard products by consumers who belong to higher income brackets and fear being penalized (Basu, et al., 2015).

In terms of other negative consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeits Aysuna and Uslu (2014), point out that the higher the level of integrity, the less likely

consumers are willing to purchase counterfeits. Personal gratification also influences the likelihood of purchasing counterfeits. Personal gratification lends to the sense of accomplishment and consumers who are more concerned with this are less likely to purchase counterfeits (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014).

On the other hand, value conscious consumers are more likely to purchase luxury counterfeits as they feel these products will still give them the same value for money as authentic luxury products (Basu, 2015). Consumers' value consciousness refers to the quality received in relation to price. Other studies also found that consumers with high value consciousness engage in counterfeit luxury purchases (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Junejo, et al., 2020; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021). The reoccurrence of this attitudinal factor indicates that value consciousness is a predominant motivator in the purchasing of counterfeit luxury goods, providing insight to understanding why consumers purchase counterfeit luxury goods.

Conclusion

Studies on the reasons for consumers' purchase intentions towards counterfeits is at large empirical and quantitative, and there is lack of deeper understanding of consumer behaviours and attitudes towards counterfeit luxury goods. This study therefore aims to add a more in-depth and subjective perspective to the knowledge on counterfeit luxury goods and the demand for them. Furthermore, literature reviewed focuses on a broad class range of consumers and this researcher aims to provide a more focused perspective from South African luxury consumers. After reviewing the literature on counterfeit luxury goods and consumers' purchase behaviours it is evident that counterfeiting poses threats to established luxury brands and is largely driven by the demand from consumers. The literature indicated that there are various personal (individual) and social factors as to why consumers opt to purchase counterfeit luxury goods. According to the literature the most prominent factors involve social recognition, novelty seeking and materialism. This provides the researcher with a deeper understanding as to why consumers purchase counterfeit luxury goods. Insights gained have been used to guide the research in understanding how luxury consumers are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market in a South African context.

2.3. Conceptualisation of Key Concepts

2.3.1. Luxury Products

According to Hein (2012), the concept of luxury is subjective, and the meaning of luxury is dependent on the user's perspective. However, the basic understanding of luxury is defined as 'something that is more than a necessity' (Hein, 2012). Luxuries can therefore be distinguished from necessities based on their availability and exclusivity. While necessities are available to everyone, luxuries are exclusive to only a few people. Luxury products can therefore be understood as exclusive goods. A high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and a high degree of non-functional associations are predominant indicators of luxury. From this Hein (2012), offers a broad definition of luxury products, stating that they have 'more than necessary and ordinary characteristics compared to other products of their category, which include their relatively high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness, and symbolic meaning'. In relation to the study, the concept of luxury products should be understood from the consumer point of view in order to investigate the topic subjectively. It should also be understood that the characteristics of luxury products are symbolic of wealth and status (Veblen, 1899).

2.3.2. Consumer Attitudes

Attitudes are formed based on the beliefs a person holds after performing a certain behaviour – the outcome of that behaviour ultimately creates an attitude (Hill, Fishbein, & Ajzen, 1977). Attitude and the individual's personal characteristics are strong predictors of a person's ethical behaviour, which in turn is a reliable indicator of whether a consumer would purchase counterfeit luxury goods or not (Leonard, Cronon & Kreie, 2004). In relation to the study attitudes play a key role in consumer intention to purchase counterfeit luxury goods. Understanding how attitudes influence purchase decisions provides deeper insight to understanding how consumers are influenced by counterfeit luxury goods.

2.3.3. Status consumption

Status consumption is defined as ‘the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others’ (Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn, 1999). Consumers who seek social approval and status are likely to purchase goods that symbolise status, such as luxury branded goods, to increase their status. Thus, the concept is used in this research to suggest a motive for consumers’ purchase decisions towards genuine and counterfeit luxury goods.

3 | METHODOLOGY

This section provides details pertaining to the research methodology, including the adopted research paradigm and approach. The population and sampling methods have been provided, followed by the data collection and analysis methods used.

3.1. Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

An interpretivist approach has been adopted to guide the study and generate knowledge. Interpretivism posits that human beings are constantly changing and are influenced by their environments; therefore, they should be studied subjectively (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Interpretivist researchers aim to understand meaningful social action and experiences. Thus, this approach allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of luxury consumers' perspectives of, and attitudes towards counterfeit luxury goods. According to Kempen (2017, cited in Ramírez-Angulo & Londono, 2020) attitudes uncover insights to understanding consumer behaviour. Therefore, by studying the subjective social realities of luxury consumers' the researcher is able to explore the ways in which luxury counterfeit goods influence their individual attitudes and subsequently understand their purchase behaviours.

Interpretivism suggests that individual behaviour is determined by the lived experiences gained out of one's direct interaction with the phenomena (Maree, 2019). This study aimed to understand the counterfeit luxury market from the perspective of luxury consumers. Furthermore, it explored the lived experiences gained out of the individuals' purchase decisions towards genuine and counterfeit luxury goods. The ontological position of interpretivism holds that reality is socially constructed, rather than objectively determined, and it is dependent on the meanings people attach to their own experiences and interactions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Luxury consumption, as well as the purchasing of counterfeit goods, involves individual and personal factors relating to consumers' social contexts, values, and beliefs (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014). An interpretivist approach to the research is justifiable as it allows the researcher to understand that individuals assign their own meanings based on their own experiences and interactions with the phenomenon that is counterfeit luxury goods.

The epistemological position of interpretivism suggests that facts are embedded with a meaning system and are fluid; depending on the context of an individual's interpretation of a phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Following an interpretivist approach, the researcher attempts to explore the phenomenon of luxury counterfeit goods through the eyes of luxury consumers. The researcher aims to gain an in-depth understanding of luxury SA consumers' perspectives on counterfeit luxury goods. Thus, motivating the interpretivist approach to the study.

Interpretive researchers are mainly concerned with humanistic qualitative methods, to view phenomena from the perspective of individuals interacting with such (Maree, 2019). Qualitative methods enable the researcher to gather rich, in-depth information on the topic (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). In relation to the study, the researcher delves into the attitudes, beliefs, values, and other personal factors underpinning luxury consumer behaviour towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. Therefore, an interpretivist approach allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena and luxury consumer behaviours.

It has also been noted that much of the literature identified on the topic of counterfeit luxury goods mainly uses quantitative research methods and seeks to find causal relationships in consumer behaviours (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015; Junejo, et al., 2020; Shunmugam, 2015; Wilcox, et al., 2009). This points to a gap in research where there is a need for understanding subjective experiences towards counterfeit luxury goods. Thus, motivating the interpretivist paradigm as an appropriate research approach to guide the study.

3.2. Research Approach & Design

The research approach determined how the researcher intended to collect, analyse, and interpret information during the study (du Plooy- Cilliers et al., 2014). The research was conducted following a qualitative approach. This approach utilises non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions and experiences, and is used to gain a deeper understanding to the problem and to generate new insights (Bhandari, 2020). A

qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to gather rich information from the sample group and investigate the topic subjectively. This allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of counterfeit luxury goods from the perspective of SA luxury consumers.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach is concerned with establishing answers to *why's* and *how's* of the topic in question (Bhandari, 2020). Thus, an open-ended and conversational approach with participants allowed the researcher to further investigate and explore participants' attitudes and behaviours towards counterfeit luxury goods and how these influences their purchase behaviours. Due to the subjective nature of a qualitative approach, the researcher was instrumental to the study, and she gave meaning to the data collected.

The research design provides a framework of appropriate research methods and techniques to successfully answer the research questions (McCombes, 2021). An exploratory research design was used in this study to gather new information on the topic (du Plooy-Cillers *et al*, 2014). This design was appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher flexibility. It enabled deeper inquiries regarding the attitudes and behaviours of participants, and how they are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market. Furthermore, the researcher adopted a deductive approach to explore broad and general theoretical concepts. The theories and literature identified were applied to the research topic. Key concepts were identified in the literature and used to seek out themes and sub themes.

3.3. Population

Population refers to the entire group of people or entities from which the researcher draws conclusions (Bhandari, 2021). The research population shared the similar characteristic of being in SEM groups 8-10, had purchased both genuine and counterfeit luxury fashion goods and resided in SA.

3.3.1. Target & Accessible Population

All individuals who fall within the established population parameters are referred to as the target population (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The target population for this study were South African luxury consumers. As the focus area of the study involved understanding how such consumers are influenced by counterfeit luxury goods in the market, the target population only included SA luxury consumers who had previously purchased a counterfeit luxury fashion item. It was not possible for the researcher to identify all individuals in this group as some may not have been willing to disclose such information. Therefore, the accessible population included luxury consumers residing in SA, with whom the researcher was able to make contact, and were willing to be open about their socio-economic status, as well as their purchase of a counterfeit luxury fashion item.

3.3.2. Population Parameters

When defining the population, the researcher established population parameters – nature, size, and unique characteristics (du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The following parameters were set:

- South African consumers.
- Consumers willing to disclose information regarding their socio-economic status.
- Consumers who had previously purchased at least two genuine items from luxury fashion brands.
- Consumers who had previously purchased at least one counterfeit luxury branded item.

3.4. Sampling

The specific group, or units from the population of interest, from which the researcher collected data from is referred to as the sample group (Bhandari, 2021). The focus area of this study is understanding consumer behaviours; therefore, the unit of analysis was people, specifically SA luxury consumers.

3.4.1. Sampling Methods: Non-probability

The study utilised non-probability sampling methods. This method involves selection based on convenience and the specific criteria (McCombes, 2021). It was not possible for the researcher to determine and gain access to the entire population. Therefore, the sample selection considered the researcher's ability to make contact with participants. According to du-Plooy-Cilliers, et al. (2014) non-probability sampling is used when every unit of the population doesn't have an equal chance of being part of the sample group. Therefore, the sample group was drawn from the accessible population. Moreover, the representativeness of the sample was not considered important as the focus of the study was not to generalise results to the greater population. Instead, the researcher was concerned with how many individuals were needed to be interviewed to explore and gain depth of an understanding of SA luxury consumers' perceptions towards counterfeit luxury fashion goods and how they are influenced by such. In this way, non-probability sampling is favoured in qualitative research, thus appropriate for the study.

The study utilised a purposive sampling method, allowing the researcher to carefully select participants to be included in the sample group (du Plooy- Cillers et al., 2014). The sample was selected based on the population parameters detailed in 3.3.2 and the researcher's ability to make contact with the participants. Purposive sampling ensured that each member of the sample group assisted in the study.

As participants in the study were from similar social and economic classes, snowball sampling was also used to increase the sample size. Participants in the study referred the researcher to individuals in their social groups who also fitted the population parameters of the study. As members of the population were difficult to identify, snowball sampling helped the researcher gain access to more members of the population.

3.4.2. Sample Size

The aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of SA luxury consumer behaviour, perceptions of, and attitudes towards the luxury counterfeit goods, thus the researcher was concerned with the depth of information collected, rather than the quantity. The study had a sample size of 4 SA luxury consumers. A purposive sampling method allowed the researcher to select appropriate members to achieve this. The researcher was hindered by the fact that members of the population of interest were hard to identify and locate, however the implementation of snowball sampling proved to be an effective method in gaining access to more participants that assisted in the study.

3.5. Data Collection Method

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering appropriate information and first-hand knowledge to answer the research questions (Bhandari, 2021). The study was concerned with exploring, understanding, and investigating participants' experiences, perceptions of, and attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. The researcher aimed to understand the counterfeit luxury market from the perspective of participants. Therefore, a qualitative data collection method, by means of in-depth interviews was an appropriate data collection method. This involved direct one-on-one engagement with individual participants. Interview questions were posed to gain an understanding of the counterfeit luxury market from their perspective, and to delve deeper to find insights and understand how such influences their purchase decisions.

A semi-structured interview approach was implemented to gather the appropriate data from participants. This approach involved organising the interview structure to cover areas of particular interest, while still allowing flexibility in scope and depth (de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011). Areas of particular interest were predetermined by the researcher, based on the research questions, as well as concepts relating to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899). The specific themes outlined in an interview guide constructed by the researcher included: materialism; social status; shopping habits and experiences; perceptions and attitudes towards luxury goods; and perceptions

and attitudes towards counterfeit luxury goods. The interview guide was constructed to help answer the research questions. The semi-structured approach allowed the interview sessions to be conversational and informal, giving the researcher flexibility to follow up and inquire on particular areas of interest avenues that emerged during the interviews. Additionally, the informal conversational approach was effective in making participants feel comfortable to speak openly about their personal experiences and feelings. All interview sessions were voice recorded, with the participants' consent, which supported the conversational structure of the interviews, as opposed to taking written notes.

On account of the potentially sensitive nature of the topic pertaining to purchasing counterfeit goods and the participants' socio-economic status, the researcher was cognisant of creating a comfortable atmosphere. The interview was structured to begin with getting to know the participant better, asking questions related to their lifestyles and interests. This added to the positive and comfortable relationship between the researcher and the participant. Broader questions relating to participants' experiences with purchasing counterfeit and genuine luxury goods were then posed. Followed by more focused follow-up questions, guided by cues indicating more information to be obtained. Open-ended, non-judgmental, questions were asked to avoid risk of leading questions and to allow the participants to give honest and varied opinions and responses (du Plooy- Cilliers et al, 2014). Although the researcher intended to conduct face-to-face interviews, participants were given the option to participate through online meeting platforms to avoid any COVID-19 concerns. Online platforms were favoured by all participants and allowed the researcher to reach participants outside the Western Cape.

3.6 Application of Data Collection

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher pre-tested the interview guide with a peer who shared similar characteristics with the target population. This was done to test the clarity of the topics and questions posed in the interview guide she constructed, and to address any unforeseen issues. The pre-test revealed that some questions overlapped and caused repetition. The researcher then re-constructed some questions for the final interview. The pre-test also allowed the researcher to practice her interview

techniques and active listening skills in preparation for the conducting the actual interviews. This gave the researcher confidence and well equipped her to begin the data collection. Once satisfied with the structure and flow of the final interview guide, actual interviews were ready to implement.

The researcher used her personal judgement to select 4 potential participants to partake in the study, along with referrals (snowball sampling). The researcher made contact with the potential and referred participants via WhatsApp and explained the purpose and focus of the study. She also screened them by asking if they enjoyed shopping for luxury fashion goods, and if they had purchased any counterfeit luxury goods in the past. All 4 individuals approached by the researcher fitted the criteria and were interested in taking part in the study. This validated the researcher's personal judgement in selecting the participants. After receiving confirmation from participants, the researcher set up interview times with participants. The interviews took place from the end of July to mid-August.

Before the interviews commenced, the researched studied and familiarised herself with the interview guide to ensure the conversational nature of the interview. Prior to conducting the interview sessions, the researcher sent participants consent forms and informed them of what to expect. The researcher also sent participants the interview guide to be fully transparent in informing participants of what was expected from them. At the start of the sessions the researcher asked the participants' permissions to begin the voice recordings. The researcher then explained the purpose of the interview and informed them that they are not being judged and that their opinions would be respected. The participants were also informed that their identity would remain anonymous, and the data collected would be kept confidential and used exclusively for the study. The researcher also asked participants to not be humble or modest in their responses and encouraged them to do most of the talking. This was done to regard the participants as experts on the topic. Participants were also informed that they wouldn't be forced to answer questions they weren't comfortable with. Furthermore, the informality of the session was also emphasised. To establish trust and rapport the researcher then began by getting to know the participant better, asking them about themselves, their lifestyle and interest. From this, the researcher was able to establish a relationship with the participants which enabled open and honest responses.

The researcher followed the interview guide, to ensure key aspects were covered, but allowed participants to lead the discussion and tell their experiences and opinions. The researcher was able to inquire on interesting aspects of their stories and probe them for more information on a topic. Throughout the interview sessions the researcher made notes on aspects of particular interest. They flowed freely with minimal interruption, and when participants started talking off topic the researcher gently guided them back to the focus of the interview. To conclude the session the researcher asked if the participant had any further remarks to add. The researcher closed the interview by thanking them for their time and valuable information.

3.7. Data Analysis Method

The researcher utilised a thematic content analysis in analysing the data collected from the in-depth interviews. This method involved identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis method was appropriate for the study as it gave importance to the participants' perceptions, experiences, and opinions, which assisted the researcher in understanding their attitudes towards and perceptions of counterfeit and genuine luxury goods and how they make purchase decisions. It helped examine different perspectives to easily allow the indication of differences and similarities. Furthermore, a thematic content analysis allowed for flexibility, enabling the researcher to generate new insights and concepts derived from the data. However, due to the method's subjectivity there was a risk of missing nuances in the data and the researcher was reflective in her own choices and interpretations.

The analysis followed a deductive approach, providing a detailed analysis of the most important aspects of the data. This involved applying predetermined themes to the data (Bingham, 2021). The themes developed considered the themes and constructs identified in the literature - TPB and the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, and the constructs therein. In doing so the researcher was able to organise the data into categories to maintain alignment to the research questions and objectives. However, this does not mean new themes identified during the data gathering would not be used.

3.8. Application of Data Analysis

The researcher applied the data analysis process adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Data preparation and familiarisation

After each interview the researcher used transcription software to transcribe the voice recordings. Using both Temi (2021) and Descript (2021), the researcher was able to save time during the transcription process. The researcher listened to the voice recordings and simultaneously read through the transcribed data to ensure they had been transcribed accurately. Minor edits in all the data were made. Although time consuming, this process allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data. The researcher then thoroughly read through the final transcripts and wrote initial notes in an organised fashion. At this stage the researcher ensured she was immersed in the data and that all text was well organised.

2. Code generation

Once the data was well prepared and the researcher had a good understanding of the text the researcher then made decisions on how to code it. The researcher reverted to the literature identified, including TPB and the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, to identify parts of the interviews that appeared to align with the relevant literature; and provided insight to participants' attitudes and perceptions towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods and how they make purchase decisions. The researcher used different colours to represent the different codes and collated the data.

3. Emergence of themes

This step involved arranging the codes into potential themes which were influenced by the antecedents of TPB, the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, and other major concepts identified in the literature. During this phase the researcher considered the relationship between the different codes. Themes and codes were then reviewed; however, nothing was discarded during this phase.

4. Review of themes

This step involved analysing whether the themes formed a clear pattern. The

researcher read through the collated extracts and re-read the entire set of data to test the themes and to ensure nothing had been missed. During this phase the researcher ensured the themes aided in understanding how participants make purchase decisions and how they are influenced by luxury counterfeit goods in the market. Some themes needed to be adjusted.

5. Definition and labeling of themes

The researcher then defined the themes identified. This involved reflecting and analysing what each theme is about, how they linked to the data set, how they related to one another and whether there were any sub-themes. To achieve this the researcher revisited the collated data extracts and organised them coherently with consistency. In order to accurately and appropriately interpret the analysed data the researcher considered the key theoretical constructs identified in the literature, as well as the researchers own sense of meaning. Furthermore, the themes were refined to identify sub themes relating to the research question. This allowed the researcher to structure and illustrate hierarchies of meaning.

6. The report

Finally, the researcher reported on the coding, analysis, and interpretation process, completely and truthfully. The researcher presented the data, providing a concise, coherent, and rich description of the data. Sufficient evidence of themes was provided by means of verbatim data extracts. During this final phase the researcher illustrated the argument in relation to the research purpose, questions and previous literature.

3.9. Trustworthiness

As the researcher carried out a qualitative research design, the trustworthiness of the study was ensured by testing the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al, 2014).

Credibility refers to how accurately the researcher interpreted the data collected from the sample group as well as the duration of time spent with each participant (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al, 2014). The researcher enhanced credibility by conducting a pre-test of the interview schedule. This allowed the researcher to practice her interview techniques and

active listening skills in preparation for the conducting the actual interviews. Due to time constraints, the researcher only utilized one data collection method. This may have had impacted the study's credibility. However, the researcher ensured participants understood the topics of consumer purchase behaviours and the counterfeit luxury market, as well as luxury goods. The researcher ensured participants knew what was expected of them by sending them the interview schedule prior to conducting the interviews. Additionally, adequate time interviewing participants was spent to gain a deep understanding of them and their perspectives. Credibility of the study was further established through triangulation. The researcher used multiply sources of secondary information and compared outcomes of the study with that of others.

Although qualitative research rejects generalisation, within qualitative research, transferability is used to invite readers of research to develop connections between elements of a study and their own experience or research (Maree, 2019). The use of a purposive sampling method was used to enhance the transferability of the research, as the researcher selected elements of the sample group based on the specific criteria focusing the scope of the study. The sample group was representative of the population in terms of the context of the study, as they were all active luxury consumers in South Africa how had experience with counterfeit luxury purchases.

Dependability is used to check the consistency and reliability of research findings and referred to in qualitative research as the generated flow of quality through the integration of the data collection method, data analysis and the theory (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al, 2014). The study provides integrated quality and consistency between the collection and analysis of data, as well as theory. The researcher has provided clear intention with full explanations throughout the study and detailed insight for how tasks were conducted.

Finally, confirmability is used to check neutrality in qualitative research. This involves how well the researcher's interpretations support the collected data in which similar conclusions can be drawn when others examine the findings (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al, 2014). To enhance confirmability, the researcher documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study.

4 | FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The following chapter identifies the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data. The research findings have been presented (see Appendices B, C and D for summaries) and interpreted in relation to the research problem and previous literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the most significant findings.

4.1. Themes & Subthemes

In analysing the interview data three themes emerged, which were supported by previous literature identified (Wilcox, et al., 2009; Stravinskiene, et al., 2013; Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015; Shunmugam, 2015; Purwanto, et al., 2019; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021). These themes will be discussed in relation to the research findings and literature. Figure 2 illustrates the themes and subthemes.

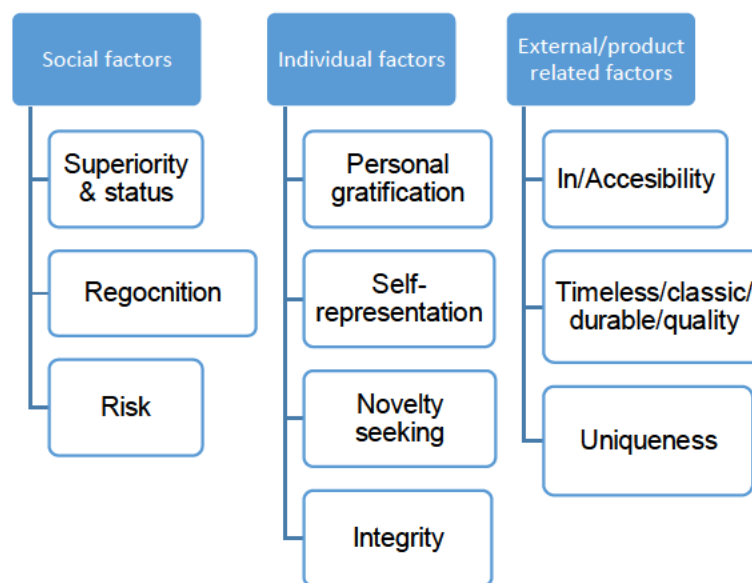


Figure 2: Themes and sub themes

Each theme has been broken down into subthemes. Included is a discussion of the research findings and interpretations. For each subtheme a table has been provided demonstrating examples of participants' verbatims. Each table indicates the participant, the interview question/topic posed or discussed during the semi-structured interview and the participants' verbatim relating to the sub-theme and finding.

4.2. Theme 1: Social factors influencing purchase decisions

4.2.1. Status and Superiority

The research found that all four participants purchase genuine luxury goods to express their superiority and status, and in this regard, they are not influenced by counterfeit alternatives. The research finding is consistent with that of previous studies (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015), which found that status conscious consumers are less likely to purchase counterfeits. Responses from the current study indicate that purchasing and owning premium priced and exclusive luxury goods “*elevates*” one’s status. One participant stated that he feels “*important*” when making genuine luxury purchases, and another stated that she “*wants to be presented to the outside world as someone with stature*”, which counterfeit goods don’t satisfy. According to the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899), superiority relates to the need to demonstrate one’s pecuniary strength by means of material possessions associated with wealth, status, and luxury. This correlates with the present study’s findings in that participants are concerned with status and superiority and demonstrate this by purchasing premium priced and exclusive luxury goods. Furthermore, TPB (Ajzen, 1991), suggests that consumers’ purchase intentions and behaviours are outcomes of their attitudes and subjective norms. Therefore, if participants’ luxury purchase intentions are related to their need for status and superiority (complying with social norms), they are less influenced to purchase counterfeit alternatives, as such purchase behaviours don’t demonstrate their pecuniary strength.

On the contrary to this, one participant had purchased a counterfeit luxury good to elevate her status without having to pay a premium price. When asked why she had purchased a particular counterfeit good she said that “*it was like R300...now I look like I can afford it.*” Her response indicated that the high price of the genuine good couldn’t be justified and she opted to fulfill her status needs by purchasing the counterfeit alternative. While only one participant was found to have made a counterfeit purchase decision influenced by affordability and status, this is consistent with that of Junejo, et al. (2020), who found that status consumption is one factor influencing consumers’ decisions to purchase counterfeit luxury goods. In addition to this Basu, et al. (2015) found that some consumers opt for cheaper counterfeit luxury goods to save money and meet their status needs. In relation to the present study, in participant one’s

circumstance, price outweighed the need for status, and she was influenced to purchase a counterfeit for less. Although less prominent, the need for status can influence purchase decisions towards counterfeits, when the price of the genuine good can't be justified by the individual.

All participants purchase genuine luxury goods to adhere to their own status and social norms. They are accustomed to a high-end, luxury lifestyle, thus performing genuine luxury purchase behaviours are their social norms. One participant stated that *“we are of a certain tax bracket, or we do certain things that only people in a certain tax bracket do”*. These participants' purchase behaviours are influenced by their social circles and subjective norms, which includes genuine luxury purchase behaviours. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991) these participants' motivation to comply with specific social groups influences them to purchase genuine luxury goods. In this regard, they are less influenced to purchase counterfeit goods, as such purchases are not within their social norms. Table 1 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Verbatim
3	Is the scarcity of luxury goods attractive to you?	<i>“I think it is attractive in the sense that, if I know I can afford this shoe and not a lot of people in the world have the shoe, then it almost subconsciously or psychologically elevates your status.”</i>
3	Image and status consciousness.	<i>“...we are of a certain tax bracket, or we do certain things that only people in a certain tax bracket do...”</i>
3	Image and status consciousness.	<i>“I'm always a person who wants to be presented to the outside world as someone with stature.”</i>
2	Motivations to purchase (counterfeit Cartier ring)	<i>“So, I was like, eh, it's R300, cool. Now I look like I can afford it.”</i>

Table 1: Superiority and status - verbatim examples.

4.2.1. Social Recognition

The data showed that two of the four participants purchase luxury branded goods to get noticed and admired by others and enhance their social standing. In accordance with the Theory of Conspicuous Consumption, individuals in higher classes purchase “wasteful or luxurious commodities” to sustain their social standing (Edgell, 1999). Participants said that *“there’s nothing better when someone says [...], I love your shoes...”* and *“When you see me on the streets when I’m flexing this bag and it’s turning with every turn that I do, just know that it’s real.”* These responses indicate that individuals in higher classes are influenced to purchase genuine luxury goods instead of counterfeit goods because of the social recognition gained. This contrasts with that of previous research (Basu, et al., 2015; Shunmugam, 2015), where social recognition was found to drive counterfeit purchases and materialistic behaviours. However, although less prominent, one participant had been motivated to purchase a counterfeit luxury good because of the social recognition gained. She said that she had purchased a counterfeit good to look “cool”. In this regard, social recognition lends to both counterfeit and genuine luxury purchase decisions. However, when participants have the means to afford genuine luxury goods, their attitudes towards making genuine purchases are favourable, and they aren’t influenced by counterfeit alternatives. Table 2 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Verbatim
2	Materialism.	<i>“And there’s nothing better when someone says, oh my gosh, I love your shoes...”</i>
3	Perceptions towards genuine luxury goods.	<i>“When you see me on the streets when I’m flexing this bag and it’s turning with every turn that I do, just know that it’s real.”</i>
2	Motivation to purchase counterfeit.	<i>“It was this whole excitement of, oh I have a [Chanel] bag and no one will know, but if I can pull it off, then look at me. I’m so cool.”</i>

Table 2: Social recognition - verbatim examples.

4.2.1. Social Risk

Two of the four participants are influenced by social risk when making luxury purchase decisions. One participant feared her “credibility [being] hindered” if she was found to have purchased a counterfeit luxury good. This indicates that counterfeits are perceived as lesser and don’t add value to the individuals’ social standing. The data showed that these participants want to be seen as someone with pecuniary strength and prestige, thus avoid engaging in counterfeit purchases. The present study found that social risk influences participants to purchase genuine luxury goods, and they are not influenced by counterfeit alternatives in their purchase decisions. This contends with that of previous research in that consumers’ readiness to take risks does not have a significant effect on consumers’ intention to purchase counterfeits (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014). Findings from the present study indicate that social risk leads to unfavourable attitudes towards counterfeits, which influences two participants to purchase genuine luxury goods over counterfeit alternatives. Table 3 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Verbatim
2	Do you think that any risks involved in purchasing counterfeits?	<i>“Well, if someone finds out it's fake, then they're like, okay. But then what other things that she uses are fake? Are all her other designer things fake? So I think it's your credibility that can get hindered.”</i>

Table 3: Risk - verbatim examples

4.3. Theme 2: Individual factors influencing consumer attitudes

4.3.1. Personal gratification

The data showed that three participants feel a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment when performing genuine luxury purchases, which counterfeits don't provide. Participants indicated that they "*worked hard*" to be able to afford their luxuries and enjoy "*spoiling*" themselves. In this regard, personal gratification lends to favourable attitudes towards genuine luxury goods. Previous studies found that personal gratification relates to the sense of accomplishment and consumers who are more concerned with this are less likely to purchase counterfeits (Aysuna & Uslu, 2014). The present study's response's indicted that participants have achieved a high-end lifestyle and enjoy practicing their ability to afford expensive non-necessities. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), participants attitudes towards purchasing genuine luxury goods are favourable, as such purchases provides them with the feeling of accomplishment. Therefore, if participants purchase intention involves personal gratification, their attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit goods are unfavourable and they are not influenced by counterfeit alternatives. Table 4 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Materialism.	<i>"...it's money that I've worked hard for. I've got no problem with spoiling myself and buying stuff like that."</i>
2	Genuine luxury purchase experience.	<i>"...but it's something that I've worked towards. That was my little, well done."</i>
3	Perceptions towards genuine luxury goods.	<i>"...there's also just a sense of gratification that comes with purchasing a luxury item."</i>
4	Perceptions towards counterfeit luxury goods	<i>"...I wouldn't feel, you know, it's not the same."</i>

Table 4: Personal gratification - verbatim examples

4.3.2. Self-representation

Three of the four participants purchase genuine luxury goods because they believe such goods reflect their style and identities. This relates to self-representation and the way they perceive themselves. Participant one stated that his luxury goods make him *“feel different to other people”* and participants four said that *“it’s just very much my style”*. Responses indicated that self-representation influences participants to purchase genuine luxury goods (if they believe the goods enhance their own identity), and they are not influenced by counterfeit alternatives. This is consistent with previous literature, stating that if an individual believes that a particular commodity is a means of self-representation then they are less likely to purchase counterfeit goods (Basu, et al, 2015). Findings indicate that these three participants’ attitudes towards counterfeits are unfavourable, because they are perceived as substandard and don’t accurately reflect their uniqueness and personal style. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), if the individual’s attitude towards a particular luxury good is related to self-representation, their attitudes towards purchasing are more favourable and they are less likely to be influenced by counterfeit alternatives because they have the means to accurately represent themselves with genuine luxury goods. Table 5 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Perceptions towards genuine luxury goods.	<i>“...something that makes you feel different, makes you feel that you are slightly different to other people.”</i>
4	Why do you like this brand [Scotch and Soda]?	<i>“...it’s just very much my style.”</i>

Table 5: Self-representation - verbatim examples

4.3.3. Novelty seeking

The data showed that two participants had purchased a counterfeit luxury good because of their perceived novelty. Participant one said that she purchased a counterfeit good because she *“hadn’t owned anything designer before”*, and participant four said that he had considered purchasing counterfeit luxury shoes *“just to have a pair”*. Participants indicated that the genuine good was out of their reach (price and physically) and opted to purchase a counterfeit alternative for the perceived novelty the good provided. In this regard if participants seek novel goods, that are out of their own reach, they are likely to be influenced by counterfeit alternatives. Novelty seeking in participants’ attitudes towards counterfeit luxury purchases is consistent with previous literature (Shunmugam, 2015; Junejo, et al., 2020). In relation to the present study, novelty seeking was found to be an anecdote of participants’ favourable attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit goods. However, in these circumstances participants were influenced to purchase counterfeit alternatives because the genuine good was out of their reach. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), if the individuals attitude relates to novelty seeking, and the genuine good is out of their reach, they are likely to be influenced by the counterfeit market. Table 6 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Motivation to purchase counterfeit luxury good.	<i>“...at that stage I hadn’t owned anything designer [...] so it was a Chanel handbag...”</i>
4	Inaccessibility of luxury goods.	<i>“...I’ve even caught myself once considering buying fake of Air Jordan Ones. Just to have a pair.”</i>

Table 6: Novelty seeking - verbatim examples

4.3.4. Integrity

Data showed that all participants own integrity had a negative influence on their attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. They understand the “*damage counterfeits do to the economy*” and the negative impacts they have on established brands; and try to not be influenced by the widely available counterfeits. According to previous research (Aysuna and Uslu, 2014) the higher the level of integrity, the less likely consumers are willing to purchase counterfeits. Responses indicated that all participants are integrous to some degree, in this regard their attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit goods are unfavourable, and in accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), they are not easily influenced to purchase counterfeit luxury goods.

Two participants indicated that in the past they would be more willing to purchase counterfeit goods, however they now make ethical considerations when making purchase decisions and try to avoid the behaviour. One reason for this might be because of their maturity and knowledge gained. Table 7 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
3	Perception of purchasing counterfeit goods.	<i>“...it’s a matter of, of morality actually.”</i>
4	Perception of purchasing counterfeit goods.	<i>“I know what damage counterfeit goods do to the market...”</i>

Table 7: Integrity - verbatim examples

4.4. Theme 3: External & product related factors influencing perceived behavioural control

4.4.1. In/Accessibility

The data showed that two participants were influenced to purchase counterfeit luxury goods because the genuine good was inaccessible in SA. They stated that the genuine good was *“difficult to access”* and that *“they weren’t yet in South Africa”*. This indicates that participants perceive genuine luxury goods in SA to be scarce and hard to find. Participants feel that the counterfeit market provides easy access to a greater variety of ‘luxury’ goods. The widely accessible counterfeit market can therefore have an influence on their purchase decisions. According to the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) perceived behavioural control refers to an individual’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest, which has an influence on the individual’s behaviour. Therefore, if participants perceive counterfeit purchases to be easier than genuine luxury purchases - because of their accessibility - they are more likely to perform counterfeit luxury purchases. The inaccessibility of some luxury goods in SA lends to this. Therefore, easy access to counterfeits, compared to the difficulty in sourcing some luxury brands in SA, influences luxury purchase decisions. Table 8 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Motivation to purchase counterfeit.	<i>“Difficult to access the genuine. For example, Louis Vuitton and Supreme, when they did their collaborations, some of that stuff was a lot harder to access, than it was to access counterfeits.”</i>
4	Motivation to purchase counterfeit.	<i>“...they weren’t yet in South Africa and they weren’t going to be a, for like another 2 years, so I found the counterfeit pair in Bellville that I bought.”</i>

Table 8: In/Accessibility - verbatim examples

4.4.2. Timelessness, durability & quality

Three participants purchase genuine luxury goods because of the timelessness, durability, and quality product characteristics. Their responses indicated that their genuine luxury purchases should be “*timeless*”, “*classic*” and have “*outstanding*” quality. Participants perceived behaviour control therefore increases if they believe the purchase will meet their expectations (timeless, durable, and quality), and they are more likely to purchase genuine luxury goods in this regard. Previous studies have found that perceived product quality and durability of products play a key role in purchasing products in general (Phau et al., 2009; Kassim et al., 2013; cited in Elsantil & Hamza, 2021). Participants are prepared to pay premium prices for goods that are timeless, durable and high quality. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), if participants’ purchase intention involves obtaining a good that is timeless, durable, and high quality their perceived behavioural control towards genuine luxury goods increases, and they are more likely to perform the purchase. In this regard they are not influenced by counterfeit luxury goods, as such goods don’t provide these benefits. Table 9 illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Genuine Luxury purchase behaviour.	<i>“I want to try and purchase something that I believe will be timeless. That will last me long.”</i>
2	Genuine Luxury purchase behaviour.	<i>“It must be something that I could wear with a dress and jeans and then a handbag that can be a classic that can last...”</i>
4	Genuine Luxury purchase behaviour.	<i>“I’ve had a trench coat from there that is in, still, perfect condition and I’ve had it for six years. It looks like I bought it yesterday. The quality is outstanding.”</i>

Table 9: Timeless/durability/quality - verbatim examples

4.4.3. Uniqueness

The research found that all participants purchase genuine luxury goods because they believe them to be unique. They are prepared to pay premium prices if they believe the luxury good is unique and makes them “*different to others*”. Participants said they had purchased genuine luxury goods because they are “*different*” and “*no one else will have it*”. According to Sharda and Bhat (2018), luxury brands are deemed as desirable and exclusive due to their scarcity and uniqueness. In this regard participants are not influenced by counterfeit alternatives, as such mass-produced goods aren’t deemed as unique. In accordance with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), if participants purchase intention involves obtaining a unique good, their perceived behavioural control towards purchasing genuine luxury goods increases and they are more likely to perform the purchase.

Three participants believe counterfeit luxury goods lack uniqueness, and that mass produced goods impede the uniqueness of genuine luxury goods. According to Sharda and Bhat (2018) the scale of the counterfeit luxury market is a threat to those established and authentic luxury brands. Moreover, Cademan, et al. (2012) argue that counterfeit luxury goods make it possible for anyone to be a “luxury brand user”, going against the core of luxury. Participants’ responses indicated that the scale and commonality of the counterfeit market had an influence on their genuine luxury purchase decisions. Participant four stated that “*if everyone's wearing a pair of Air Jordan Ones, I don't want a pair, even if everyone else is wearing fakes.*” This indicates that the mass availability of counterfeits influences participants’ purchase behaviours to source brands and certain products that can’t be easily replicated. In this regard the mass availability of counterfeits lends to decreased behavioural control towards genuine luxury goods that are commonly counterfeited, because they don’t provide the benefit of uniqueness that comes with purchasing a luxury good. In line with TPB (Ajzen, 1991), if participants purchase intention involves uniqueness, then they are more likely to purchase less commonly counterfeited luxury goods. Their purchase decisions are therefore influenced by the commonality of mass-produced counterfeits. In this way they are not influenced to purchase counterfeit luxury goods, rather, the counterfeit luxury market influences them to purchase goods that are harder to replicate. Table 10, on the following page, illustrates examples for the above findings.

Participant	Interview question/topic	Quote
1	Perceptions of genuine luxury goods.	<i>"... something that is exclusive."</i>
4	Genuine Luxury purchase behaviour.	<i>"I know no one else will have it. It fits me perfectly."</i>
4	Perceptions of counterfeit luxury goods.	<i>"Cause when you see every, single person [wearing it]. If everyone's wearing a pair of Air Jordan Ones, I don't want a pair. Even if everyone else is wearing fakes."</i>

Table 10: Uniqueness - verbatim examples

4.5 Summary of Most Significant Findings

The following summarises the most significant findings regarding the factors that influence counterfeit and genuine luxury purchase decisions, in relation to TPB (Ajzen, 1991).

4.5.1. Factors influencing counterfeit luxury purchase decisions

From the findings and interpretations is deduced that participants' counterfeit luxury purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by social norms of status and superiority, social recognition, novelty seeking attitudes, and easy access and affordability of goods. Figure 3 demonstrates this in line with TPB, and provides examples of participants verbatims.

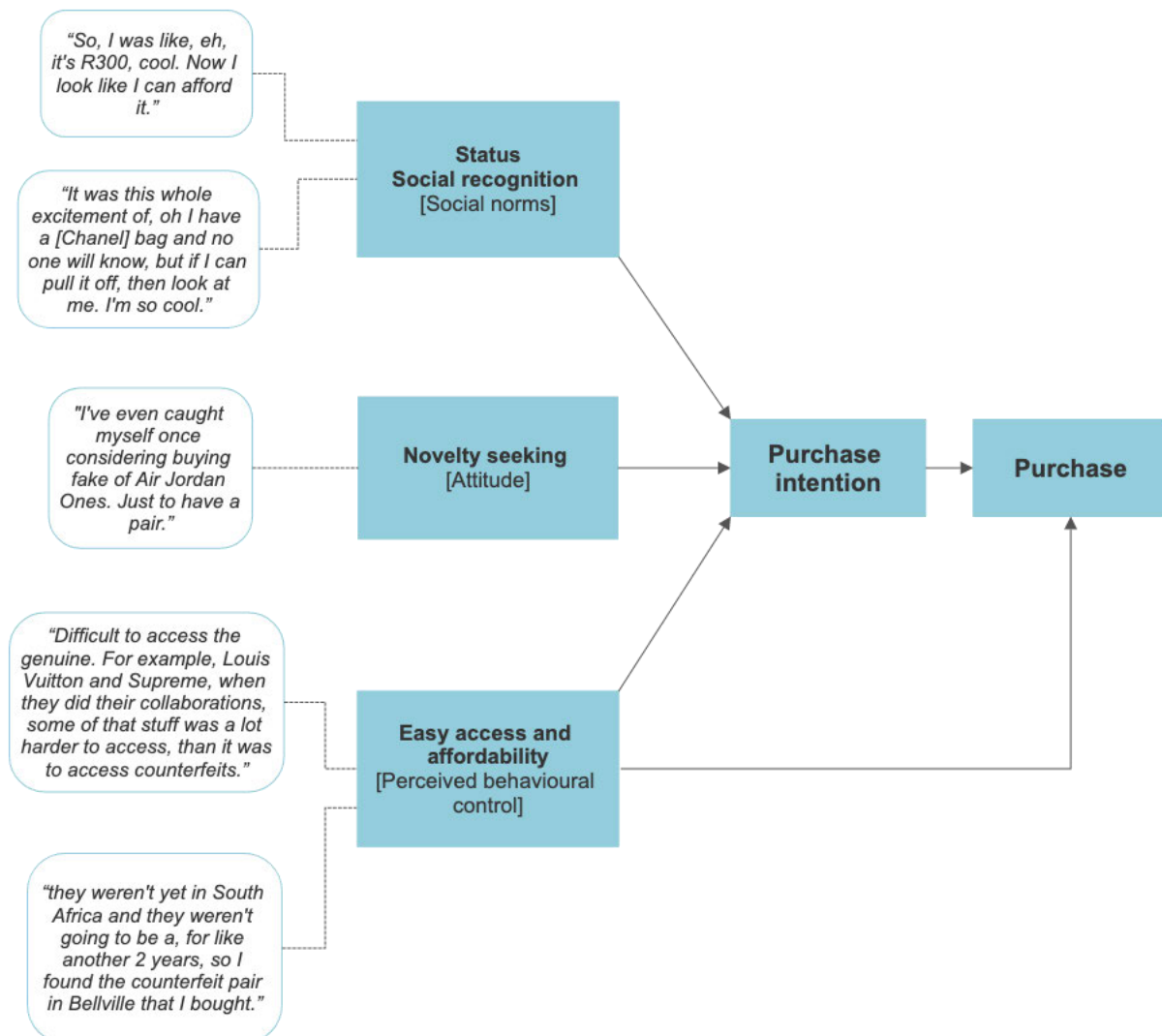


Figure 3: Factors influencing counterfeit luxury purchase decisions

4.5.2. Factors influencing genuine luxury purchase decisions

From the findings and interpretations it is deduced that participants' genuine luxury purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by social norms relating to status, superiority and social recognition, attitudes relating to personal gratification, self-representation and integrity, and the goods' timelessness, durability, quality, uniqueness and accessibility. Figure 4 demonstrates this in line with TPB, and provides examples and participants' verbatims.

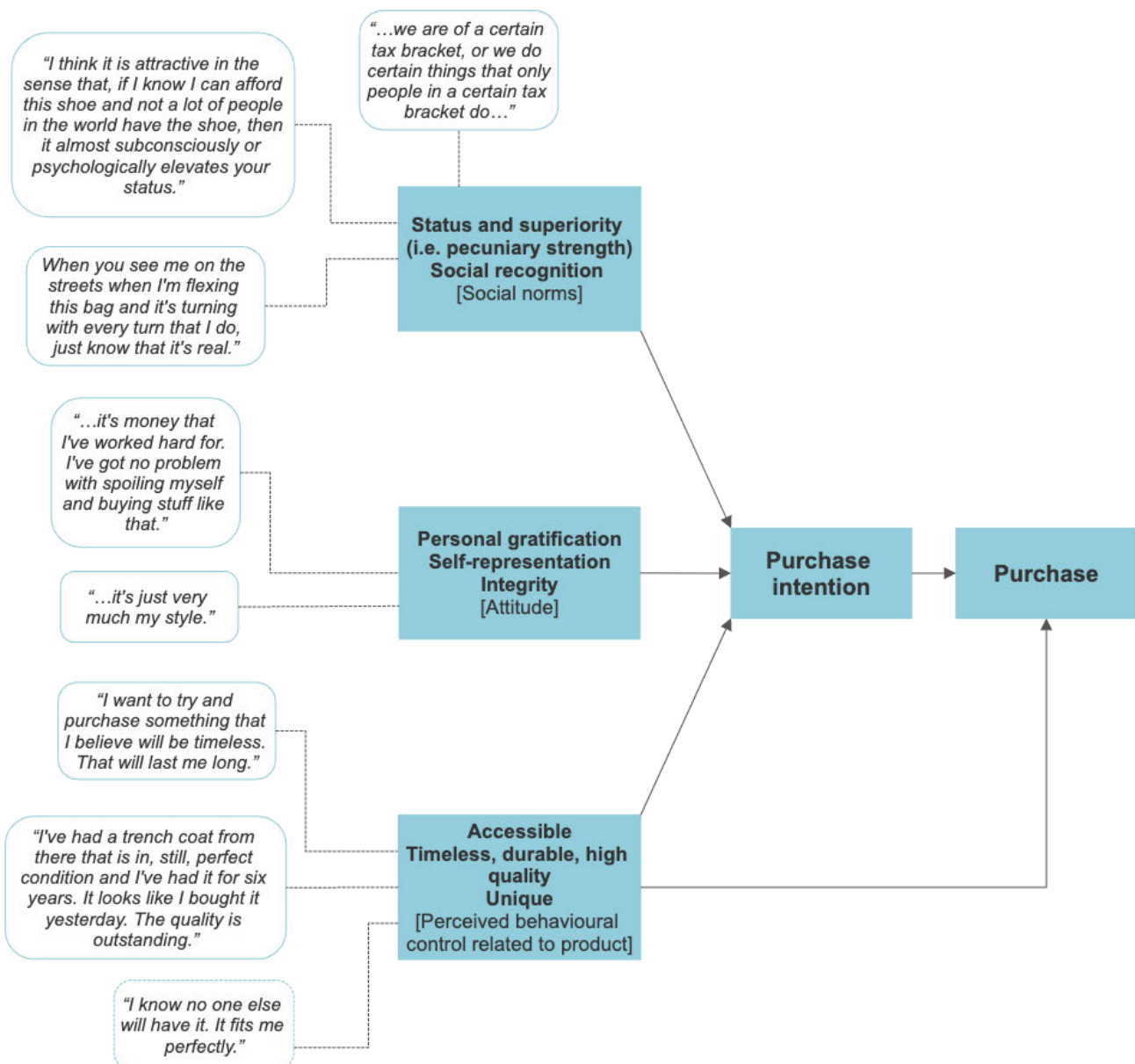


Figure 4: Factors influencing genuine luxury purchase decisions

5 | CONCLUSIONS

The following addresses the research questions and objectives, followed by the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. Ethical considerations are discussed, and the significance of the study is highlighted.

5.1. Concluding Answering the Research Questions

The primary research question inquires on the factors that influence SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. However, in order to answer this question the following sub-questions needed to be explored:

1. What are SA luxury consumers attitudes towards and perceptions of counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?
2. How do SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?
3. How does the counterfeit luxury market influence SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions?

5.1.1. What are SA luxury consumers attitudes towards and perceptions of counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?

The first sub-question considered SA luxury consumers' attitudes towards and perceptions of counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. From the findings outlined in Chapter 4, and appendix B it is concluded that more favourable attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods are antecedes of novelty seeking. While favourable attitudes towards purchasing genuine luxury goods are antecedes of personal gratification and self-representation. Findings also indicate that less favourable attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit luxury goods are antecedes of integrity. However, the study didn't find any antecedes of less favourable attitudes towards purchasing genuine luxury goods.

According to TPB (Ajzen, 1991), purchase decisions can be determined by favourable or unfavorable attitudes towards the purchase in question. Therefore, the researcher identified various antecedents of favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards counterfeit and genuine luxury purchases by understanding participants' perceptions towards such. In doing so, insight was gained on SA luxury consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods, thus addressing secondary objective one.

5.1.2. How do SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?

The second sub-question considered how SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. From the findings outlined in Chapter 4 and appendix B, it can be concluded that SA luxury consumers make counterfeit and genuine luxury purchase decisions based on various social factors, individual factors, and product-related factors. This is consistent with several previous studies (Wilcox, et al., 2009; Stravinskiene, et al., 2013; Aysuna & Uslu, 2014; Basu, et al., 2015; Shunmugam, 2015; Purwanto, et al., 2019; Junejo, et al., 2020; Elsantil & Hamza, 2021). In relation to counterfeit luxury purchase decisions, social factors include perceived status and social recognition gained; individual factors include novelty seeking attitudes; and product-related factors include accessibility and affordability. In relation to genuine luxury purchase decisions, social factors include the social norm of status and superiority and the need for social recognition; individual factors include personal gratification and self-representation; and product-related factors include accessibility (price and physical), timelessness, durability, quality, and uniqueness.

The Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1889) was used to understand materialistic behaviours and the desire of luxury consumers to acquire visibly branded luxury fashion items. The researcher identified the various social, individual and product-related factors based on participants' responses in order to understand how SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods, thus addressing secondary objective two.

5.1.3. How does the counterfeit luxury market influence SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions?

The third sub-question considered how the counterfeit luxury market influences SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions. From the findings highlighted in Chapter 4 and Appendix B two contradicting inferences are made. Firstly, the ease of access and affordability of the counterfeit market influences consumers to purchase counterfeit luxury goods. Secondly, the mass production and lack of uniqueness in commonly counterfeited goods negatively influences consumers purchase decisions towards counterfeit and commonly (or easily) counterfeited genuine luxury goods. Therefore, the counterfeit luxury market influences consumers to either purchase counterfeit goods, or source genuine luxury goods that are harder to counterfeit. In addressing this research question the researcher identified participants' perceptions of the counterfeit market. In doing so, some understanding of how SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by the counterfeit market was gained. Therefore, an attempt was made in addressing the third secondary objective.

5.1.4. Primary question: What are the factors that influence SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?

In addressing the three sub-questions, the primary research question can be addressed. From the findings outlined in Chapter 4 and appendix B it is inferred that SA luxury consumers are influenced by social factors (subjective norms), individual factors (attitudes), and product related factors, which relate to perceived behavioural control. In answering the research question, TPB (Ajzen, 1991) was used to understand the various factors influencing consumers' purchase behaviours. Therefore, consumers are more likely to perform a purchase if their attitude towards the purchase decision is favourable; the purchase decision complies with their social norms; and the ease in which the purchase decision can be performed and meet expectations. In accordance with this, it is deduced that consumers are more likely to purchase counterfeit luxury goods if their attitudes involve novelty seeking; if they seek social recognition and are motivated to comply with a high-status social norm; and easy access to goods (figure 3). It can also be deduced that consumers are more likely

to purchase genuine luxury goods if their attitude towards the purchase relates to personal gratification and self-representation; they are motivated to comply with high-status and superiority social norms and seek social recognition; and goods are timeless, durable, high quality, unique and easily accessible (figure 4).

In addressing the primary research question the researcher was able to gain insight on the factors that influence SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions with regards to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. Therefore, the primary objective is addressed.

5.2. Implications for Further Research

The findings from the study revealed that SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by the accessibility of counterfeit goods. However, it was found that the accessibility and commonality of counterfeits influences consumers to either purchase counterfeit goods, or to purchase genuine goods that are harder to counterfeit. This has not been validated by previous research, thus further research is needed to understand if consumers are more likely to purchase more accessible counterfeits, or source genuine goods that are harder to counterfeit. Additionally, future research should investigate the extent SA luxury consumers would go to to obtain a unique genuine luxury good.

The study also revealed that the lack of uniqueness in commonly counterfeited luxury goods negatively influences consumers' luxury purchase decisions. Therefore, further research is required to understand how luxury goods can maintain their uniqueness and scarcity, whilst also maintaining their premium prices, to lessen the threat of counterfeits.

5.3. Limitations & Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher was constrained for time during the study which affected her ability to obtain a diverse enough sample group to collect information from. Additionally, the size of the sample group may detract from the trustworthiness of the study. Future research on this topic should focus on obtaining a larger and more diverse sample group to

represent the target population more accurately. The research was also constrained by the possibility of participants reserving sensitive information pertaining to their socio-economic status and counterfeit purchase experiences. In order to ensure more honest and detailed responses, it is recommended that future research on the topic utilizes an open-ended questionnaire for participants to complete without the fear of being judged.

Furthermore, it may be likely that the participants financial conditions have shifted over the years, thereby compromising their perspectives on counterfeit luxury goods. For instance, participants could be considered luxury consumers during the study, however in the past they may have not been able to afford genuine luxury goods in the past. It is recommended that future research takes this into consideration when describing population parameters for the sample group (e.g., luxury consumers who have purchased a counterfeit good in the last 12 months).

5.4. Ethical Considerations

5.4.1. Participants

Informed consent: All participants were required to sign consent forms before the research was conducted. The requirements were clearly explained to participants, which included them disclosing information regarding their socio-economic status, and spending habits. They were also ensured that their identities were kept unknown. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Data collected from participants: The researcher ensured participants that their identities would not be revealed, and sensitive information will not be traced back to them. The interview setting considered the possibility of other people hearing the participant to avoid personal information being shared publicly.

Dealing with sensitive information: Sensitive and personal information will be protected, and the researcher did not allow her personal feelings to interfere.

Providing incentives: The researcher relied on willingness of participation rather than

providing incentives. This diminished the feeling of bribery or favour owing to participants in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity: The participants are only identified by the researcher due to purposive sampling. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. Participants were assigned non-disclosing labels (i.e., Participant 1).

Deception: The researcher fully explained the purpose, background, processes of the study to participants.

5.4.2. Researcher

Falsifying information: The researcher has not tampered with any collected information or participants personal information for any reasons; social advantages, desired outcome etc. The data was collected responsibly and used to gain insight and understanding of the participants.

Bias: Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher tried to block out any pre-conceptions or feelings towards counterfeit goods and luxury consumption.

Misusing information: The collected data from participants is solely for research purpose, however, if further research should develop, consent from participants is needed before any data is released.

Using inappropriate research methods: The researcher refrained from deviating from the communicated research purpose to ensure that the participants are protected from harmful and insensitive instances.

5.5. Significance of the Study

It is understood that established luxury brands are at risk of losing market share due to the issue of counterfeiting and consumer demand for counterfeit goods. While previous research on the topic highlights that consumers purchase counterfeit luxury goods when they don't have the financial means to purchase from genuine luxury

brands (Cant, et al., 2014; Purwanto, et al., 2019). However, these consumers' counterfeit purchase decisions pose no threat to established luxury brands, as they don't have the means to afford genuine goods. Therefore, the present study aimed to understand the counterfeit market from the perspective of SA luxury consumers, and the factors that influence them when making purchase decisions. In doing so, light is shed on the factors influencing luxury consumers purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. Most significantly, results indicated that SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by the commonality and lack of uniqueness in easily counterfeited goods, motivating them to source genuine goods that are less commonly counterfeited. Therefore, results from the study are of significance to established luxury brands threatened by the counterfeit market.

From the results, it is recommended that practitioners in the luxury brand industry market their goods to provide the benefit of timelessness, durability, and high quality, as these product characteristics were found to positively influence consumers to purchase genuine luxury goods over counterfeit goods. Furthermore, the study's results suggest that luxury brand practitioners should improve their efforts to ensure goods maintain their uniqueness and are harder to counterfeit to lessen the threat of the counterfeit market.

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Appendix A: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - THEME 1

Theme 1: Social Factors	
In relation to genuine luxury goods:	All participants believe genuine luxury goods are exclusive and purchasing them will deem them superior and enhance their status. Two of the four participants believe purchasing genuine luxury goods will get them noticed and admired by others (social recognition). All participants believe purchasing genuine luxury goods are their social norm.
In relation to counterfeit luxury goods:	One participant believed purchasing counterfeit luxury goods would enhance her status and she would be recognised by others in high-class social groups, when the price of the genuine good couldn't be justified or attained. Two of the four participants believe purchasing counterfeit luxury goods are a social risk because they will hinder their reputation. All participants believe purchasing counterfeit luxury goods aren't within their social norms, as they are accustomed to a high-end, luxury lifestyle.
Participants purchase decisions:	If participants believe purchasing a genuine luxury good will enhance their status and get them noticed and admired (social recognition), they are motivated to comply with luxury social norms, and they are more likely to perform the purchase. Conversely, although less prominent, if the participant believes the counterfeit good would enhance status and social recognition, and the price of the genuine good can't be justified or attained, the participant is more likely to perform the counterfeit purchase. If participants believe purchasing a counterfeit luxury good will hinder their reputation (social risk) their compliance with their social norms deem them less likely to perform the purchase. Participants' purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by their social norms. Their social groups follow a high-end, luxury lifestyle where purchasing genuine luxury purchases are a normative behaviour. Participants are therefore motivated to comply; thus, they are not influenced to purchase counterfeit luxury goods.
<u>From the above, the following is inferred:</u> Genuine luxury purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by participants' need for status and superiority as well as social recognition (social norms). Less predominantly, counterfeit luxury purchase decisions can be influenced by the need for status, superiority, and social recognition (social norms), when the price of the genuine good can't be justified or attained. On the other hand, counterfeit luxury purchase decisions are negatively influenced by the perceived social risk involved.	

Table 11: Summary of findings - theme 1

Appendix B: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - THEME 2

Theme 2: Individual factors	
In relation to genuine luxury goods:	Three participants believe genuine luxury purchases provide a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment (personal gratification). Three participants believe genuine luxury purchase reflect their personal style and identity (self-representation).
In relation to counterfeit luxury goods:	Two participants believe counterfeit luxury purchases are novel. All participants are integrous to some degree and believe counterfeit luxury purchases to be unethical.
Participants purchase decisions:	If participants believe genuine luxury purchases will provide them with personal gratification their attitudes towards the purchase will be more favourable and If participants believe genuine luxury purchases represent their personal style and identity (self-representation) their attitudes towards the purchase will be more favourable and they are more likely to perform the behaviour. If participants believe counterfeit luxury purchases are unethical (integrity) their attitude towards that purchase will be less favourable and they are less likely to perform the purchase. On the other hand, if participants believe counterfeit luxury purchases to be novel, they are more likely to perform the purchase.
<u>From the above, the following is inferred:</u> Genuine luxury purchase decisions are influenced by the individual's personal gratification, self-representation, and degree of integrity; and counterfeit luxury purchase decisions are negatively influenced by the individual's own integrity. However, counterfeit luxury purchase decisions can be influenced by the novelty obtained if genuine goods are inaccessible.	

Table 12: Summary of findings - theme 2

Appendix C: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - THEME 3

Theme 3: Product related factors	
In relation to genuine luxury goods:	Participants believe some genuine luxury goods to be inaccessible and scarce in South Africa. Three participants believe genuine luxury goods to be timeless, durable, and high quality. All participants believe genuine luxury goods to be unique if they are harder to counterfeit. Participants are prepared to pay premium prices for genuine luxury goods if they are timeless, durable, high quality and accessible.
In relation to counterfeit luxury goods:	All participants believe counterfeit luxury goods are substandard quality, highly accessible and common. Three participants believe counterfeit luxury goods are mass produced and impede the uniqueness of genuine goods.
Participants purchase decisions:	If genuine luxury goods are inaccessible in SA, participants perceived behavioural control will be less and they are less likely to perform the purchase. If genuine luxury goods are harder to counterfeit, and participants they are more likely to perform the purchase. If genuine luxury goods are timeless, durable, high quality and accessible, participants have more behaviour control, and they are more likely to perform the purchase. If participants believe counterfeit luxury goods to be mass produced and common, they have less behaviour control, and they are less likely to perform the purchase. Furthermore, if a genuine luxury good is commonly counterfeited, participants attitudes towards purchasing will be less favourable, and they are less likely to perform the purchase.
<u>From the above, the following is inferred:</u> Genuine luxury purchase decisions are influenced by the good's timelessness, durability, quality, uniqueness, and accessibility. However, genuine luxury purchase decisions can be negatively influenced by counterfeits in two contradicting ways: the genuine good's inaccessibility; and its counterfeit commonality. Firstly, genuine luxury purchase decisions can be negatively influenced by the goods' scarcity and inaccessibility in SA, while counterfeit luxury purchase decisions can be positively influenced by the goods accessibility. Secondly, genuine luxury purchase decisions can be negatively influenced by the commonality and mass production of counterfeits. If a genuine luxury good is commonly counterfeited, participants believe it lacks uniqueness, and they are influenced to source genuine luxury goods that are harder to counterfeit. The mass production of counterfeits, and ease of replication, therefore, influences participants genuine luxury purchase decisions.	

Table 13: Summary of findings - theme 3

Annexure A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Gabrielle Elizabeth Izzard, and I am a student at Vega School Cape Town I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Carol Affleck about South African luxury consumer behaviour toward the consumption of luxury counterfeit goods, how these consumers are influenced by apparent counterfeit luxury goods in the market. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of SA luxury consumer behaviour toward the consumption of luxury counterfeit goods, and how such goods in the market influence consumers their purchase decisions. The study will provide new emerging ideas around the issue of counterfeiting in a South African context, as well as rich information regarding South African luxury consumers and their purchase behaviours to provoke further research. Furthermore, the study will potentially provide luxury brands and marketers with insights to improve their brand and marketing activities, and work towards overcoming the threat of counterfeiting. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I believe you fulfil the criteria of a South African Luxury consumer, who has previously purchased a counterfeit luxury good, and is willing to disclose information regarding your socio-economic status (social standing and class) as well as spending habits. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to engage in a one-on-one interview/discussion with you (over a video call or in person) and get to know you and your experiences and perspectives on purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might,

however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your experiences, attitudes and perspectives on purchasing counterfeit luxury goods. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary.
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so.
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at The IIE Vega School Cape Town, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Gabrielle Izzard

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Carol Affleck

[REDACTED]

Annexure B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Date: 5 July 2021

Student name: Gabrielle Elizabeth Izzard

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega Cape Town

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns, and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor/Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name:

Signature:

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Supervisor/Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC).

Annexure C: PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In-depth interview guide

July 2021

1. Introduction and establishing rapport

- a) Interviewer to thank participant for his/her time and explain purpose of the one-on-one interview. Informality of the interview is stressed, and the interviewer to inform the participant that the session will involve a conversation about their opinions and experiences and that the participant is regarded as the expert on the topic. The interviewer to explain to participant that he/she is not being judged and there are no wrong answers, but rather his/her opinions are welcomed and respected.
- b) Break the ice – what is one luxury fashion brand/item you would absolutely recommend? In your opinion, why?

2. Personal

- a) Tell me a little bit about yourself and your lifestyle
 - Age?
 - What is your profession and why?
 - How do you usually spend your disposable income?
- b) How do you feel towards material possessions?
 - What do they do for you?
- c) Do you consider yourself to be image/status conscious? How so?
- d) Do you tend to express yourself through luxury branded fashion items/clothing?
- e) Do you follow fashion trends, or prefer to be unique?

3. Shopping habits and experiences

- a) Tell me about your shopping/spending habits
 - Where do you like to shop for clothing and fashion items?
 - What are some of your favourite luxury brands/items?
 - How often do you shop for fashion items for yourself?
 - Do you consider yourself brand loyal? How so? Which brands? Why?
 - Do you consider yourself to be a 'smart shopper' (looking for deals)?
- b) Can you tell me about your experience with purchasing a genuine luxury good?
 - Where did you purchase it from?

- Is there anything noteworthy about your purchase/experience?
- What are the main reasons you decided to purchase?
- How often do you purchase luxury fashion goods for yourself?
- c) Can you tell me about your experiences with purchasing fake luxury branded goods?
 - Where did you purchase from?
 - What are the main reasons you decided to purchase?
 - How much will you spend on a fake luxury fashion item?
 - Do you frequently purchase fake luxury branded goods?

4. Luxury goods

- a) How would you define a luxury good/brand?
 - What makes a brand 'luxury', for you?
- b) In general, how do you feel towards wearing luxury branded fashion items?
 - Is the scarcity of genuine luxury brands attractive to you?
 - Do you think luxury branded fashion goods give an element of uniqueness?
- c) On average, how much are you willing to spend on a luxury fashion item?
- d) What motivates you to spend high prices on luxury fashion goods?
 - Are you brand conscious?
 - Price conscious?
- e) What goal do you aim to achieve when purchasing luxury fashion goods?
 - Status?
 - Uniqueness?
 - Self-expression?
 - Value and timelessness?
 - Functionality?

5. Counterfeit/fake luxury goods

- a) How would you define a counterfeit/fake luxury good?
- b) In general, how do you feel towards fake luxury goods?
 - Would you recommend?
 - Do you find them more convenient and available?
 - What value do they provide for you?
- c) Do you believe there to be any risks involved in purchasing a counterfeit luxury good?
 - If so, why would you not opt for a genuine good?

- d) In your opinion, do you think the availability of counterfeit luxury goods diminishes the value of genuine luxury goods?
- e) What goal do you aim to achieve when purchasing counterfeit luxury fashion goods?

6. Close

Interviewer to thank participants for their participation and time and valuable information and explain how their interview will assist the researcher further. The interviewer will provide contact details in case any of the participants wish to get in touch or follow up.

Annexure D: FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY DOCUMENT

TITLE: Exploring the Factors Influencing South African Luxury Consumers' Purchase Decisions in Relation to Genuine and Counterfeit Luxury Goods

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Lit Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To explore and gain a deeper understanding of SA luxury consumers' purchase behaviours and the factors that influence them when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods.	What are the factors that influence SA luxury consumers when making purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods?	In relation to luxury consumers, there is a lack of understanding on how their purchase decisions are influenced by the counterfeit luxury market. Therefore, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the counterfeit luxury market from the perspective of luxury consumers to understand how their purchase behaviours are influenced by such. Furthermore, gaining insight on this topic, will aid in broadening the body of knowledge on luxury consumer behaviour and understanding what compels these individuals to pay premium prices.	Ajzen (1991) Veblen(1899)	Theme 1: Counterfeiting of luxury brands Theme 2: Factors influencing purchase intentions towards counterfeit luxury goods Theme 3: Consumer attitudes influencing counterfeit luxury purchases	Paradigm: Interpretivism Epistemology: Understand consumer behavior in the context of attitudes and behaviors towards luxury brands. Ontology: Luxury consumption, and the purchasing of counterfeit goods, involves individual and personal factors relating to consumers' social contexts, values, and beliefs. Axiology: Uniqueness.	Qualitative and exploratory. Population Population Parameters: South African consumers. Consumers willing to disclose information regarding their socio-economic status. Consumers who had previously purchased at least two genuine items from luxury fashion brands. Consumers who had previously purchased at least one counterfeit luxury branded item.	In-depth interviews, one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured.	Participants All participants signed consent forms. The interview setting considered the possibility of other people hearing the participant to avoid personal information being shared publicly. Sensitive and personal information will be protected. Confidentiality and anonymity. Researcher: Information was not falsified. Bias was removed. Appropriate research methods were used.	1. Participants' counterfeit luxury purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by novelty seeking attitudes, the desire for status and social recognition, and easy access and affordability of goods. 2. Participants' genuine luxury purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by personal gratification, self-representation, social norms relating to status, superiority and social recognition, and the timelessness, durability, quality, uniqueness and accessibility. 3. The accessibility and commonality of counterfeits has an influence on consumers purchase decisions.	Further research is needed to understand if consumers are more likely to purchase more accessible counterfeits, or source genuine goods that are harder to counterfeit. Additionally, future research should investigate the extent SA luxury consumers would go to to obtain a unique genuine luxury good. Further research is required to understand how luxury goods can maintain their uniqueness and scarcity, whilst also maintaining their premium prices, to lessen the threat of counterfeits.

Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
In relation to SA luxury consumers however, there is a lack of understanding of the counterfeit market from the perspective of these individuals, and the factors that influence their purchase decisions.	1. To gain insight and understand the attitudes and perceptions of SA luxury consumers towards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. 2. To gain insight and understand how SA luxury consumers make purchase decisions with regards counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. 3. To investigate and understand how the counterfeit luxury market in SA influences SA luxury consumer purchase decisions.	1. Luxury products 2. Consumer attitudes 3. Status consumption	Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) Theory of Conspicuous Consumption (Veblen, 1899)			Non-probability Sampling method: Purposive and snowball Size: 4	Unit of Analysis Consumers Data Analysis Method(s) Thematic analysis	Time constraints; sample size; lack of experience; participants changing conditions.	The study aimed to understand the counterfeit market from the perspective of SA luxury consumers, and the factors that influence them when making purchase decisions. In doing so, light is shed on the factors influencing luxury consumers purchase decisions in relation to counterfeit and genuine luxury goods. Most significantly, results indicated that SA luxury consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by the commonality and lack of uniqueness in easily counterfeited goods, motivating them to source genuine goods that are less commonly counterfeited	