A goal-directed interactionist perspective of counterfeit consumption: The role of perceived detection probability

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Abstract:

Purpose: To provide a keener understanding of consumers' decision-making processes and motivations regarding deliberate counterfeit consumption, this paper aims to integrate insights from several theoretical perspectives and the relevant literature. It proposes an overlooked yet important goal-directed interactionist perspective and identifies and tests a novel construct called consumers' perceived counterfeit detection (PCD) in a proposed model.
Design/methodology/approach: This paper uses a comprehensive review of the literature to justify its proposed perspective, PCD construct and model, followed by in-depth interviews and survey data to test its proposed model and hypotheses. **Findings:** Besides the theoretical insights derived from the proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective, empirical results demonstrate the important role that PCD plays in counterfeit consumption. In fact, PCD not only negatively and directly affects consumers' intentions to deliberately purchase counterfeits but also weakens the positive effect consumers' attitudes have on their purchase intentions. **Research limitations/implications:** This research makes several theoretical contributions. First and foremost, differing from other approaches (e.g. personal, economic and ethical), this research justifies an overlooked yet important goal-directed interactionist perspective and develops a refined and substantive framework including its proposed PCD construct. This framework provides opportunities to investigate behavior as an interpretative and dynamic process, vitalizing the domain of counterfeit-consumption behavior studies in particular and ethical behavior research in general. Second, at the construct level, the proposed hypothetical construct of PCD comprises the building blocks for knowledge advancement. Finally, rather than testing theories incrementally (such as the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action), this research fosters the development of new ideas regarding our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective and PCD construct, which can be applied to other contexts and constructs that share the same or similar mechanisms and features. **Practical implications:** According to the proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective, this research offers insights regarding why understanding consumers' different goals (e.g. social-adjustive vs value-expressive; attainment vs maintenance) is important for marketers; how consumers' goals interplay with their choices through their actions and consumption (e.g. compete vs substitute);

and why, how and when their goals interact with their actions, choices and situations during their goal-setting, goal-striving and goal-realization stages that may lead to unethical behavior. At the construct level, the better marketers understand PCD, the more effectively they can use it. At the level of relationships and procedures, this research can offer important insights for businesses that look for "best practices" in the fight against deliberate counterfeit consumption.
Originality/value: First, by integrating insights from goal-directed behavior, self-regulatory theories and interactionist theory, this paper proposes its own goal-directed interactionist perspective. It then develops and tests a refined and substantive model of counterfeit decision-making in which PCD stands as a novel construct. The paper's proposed perspective and model provide opportunities to investigate behavior as an interpretative and dynamic process, taking the domain of ethical behavior research (e.g. counterfeit-consumption behavior) from descriptive frameworks to testable theories.

Keywords: counterfeit | detection probability | ethical behavior

Article:

Introduction

Counterfeiting is a worldwide problem, targeting everything from luxury brands to life-saving medicines and computer chips. Accounting for about 10 per cent of world trade, the global market for counterfeited brands is on the scale of $500 billion (Heffes, 2008). Global losses due to counterfeit luxury brands have increased from $512 billion in 2004 (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006) to $600 billion in 2014 (Thaichon and Quach, 2016). Industries have made various and concerted efforts to curb counterfeiting. These efforts include changing the way their products look, spending exorbitant budgets on technology to authenticate their products, modifying their products' packaging, and even poring over dumpsters and carrying out raids on factories suspected of counterfeiting, all leading to unlimited spending (Balfour, 2005).

Despite such efforts, curtailing counterfeiting remains a challenge. An important reason for this challenge relates to consumers. While some consumers unwittingly become victims of either deceptive or blurred counterfeiting, others are willing collaborators of non-deceptive counterfeiting as they deliberately purchase counterfeit products (Bian *et al.*, 2016; Wilcox *et al.*, 2009) and thereby create a stable demand for such items. Of the three types of counterfeiting (deceptive, blurred, and non-deceptive), deceptive counterfeiting refers to purchases made wherein consumers are not aware that an item is counterfeit, but believe it is genuine (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988). Blurred counterfeiting refers to purchases in which consumers are not sure if an item is counterfeit (Bian, 2006), whereas non-deceptive counterfeiting (deliberate counterfeit consumption) refers to purchases in which consumers are fully aware that they are buying counterfeit items (Grossman and Shapiro, 1988; Wu, 2011). Deliberately purchasing counterfeit products is particularly prevalent in the luxury goods sector (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000). For some consumers, counterfeit luxury items (e.g. Louis Vuitton purses) carry almost the same symbolic value as genuine ones, but at a fraction of the original price. This results in a positive perceived value in using the counterfeit counterparts thereby making their motivation to purchase a counterfeit luxury item apparent and strong.

While enjoying the numerous benefits of counterfeit products, consumers might perceive various risks (social, psychological, and functional) associated with their use, including the possibility of detection by important others (employers, co-workers, friends, and branded-product companies) (Bamossy and Scammon, 1985; Chakraborty *et al.*, 1996; Wu, 2011). If detected, consumers' personal images may be at stake. To continue enjoying the benefits associated with using counterfeit products, consumers may not want other people – especially important others – to know that the brands they use are not authentic.

To develop a refined understanding of consumers' motivations and decision-making processes, this research focuses on consumers who engage in non-deceptive counterfeiting. In particular, to address the gaps in the literature detailed below, we first integrate insights from goal-directed behavior, self-regulatory theories, and interactionist theory. We then propose our own goal-directed interactionist perspective, and develop and test a refined and substantive model of counterfeit decision-making (Figure 1) which includes a novel construct called consumers' *perceived counterfeit detection* (PCD). We define PCD as the perceived likelihood that an individual's use of counterfeit products will be discovered or "found out" by important others. We demonstrate the important role that PCD plays, both theoretically and empirically, and show how PCD can be integrated into other theories (e.g. the theory of planned behavior, goal-directed models). The research then examines PCD's distinctive and interactive effects with other theories' key constructs (e.g. attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control). Finally, it delineates the study's theoretical and managerial contributions along the lines of research perspective, construct, relationships and theories, particularly within the domain of ethical human behavior.

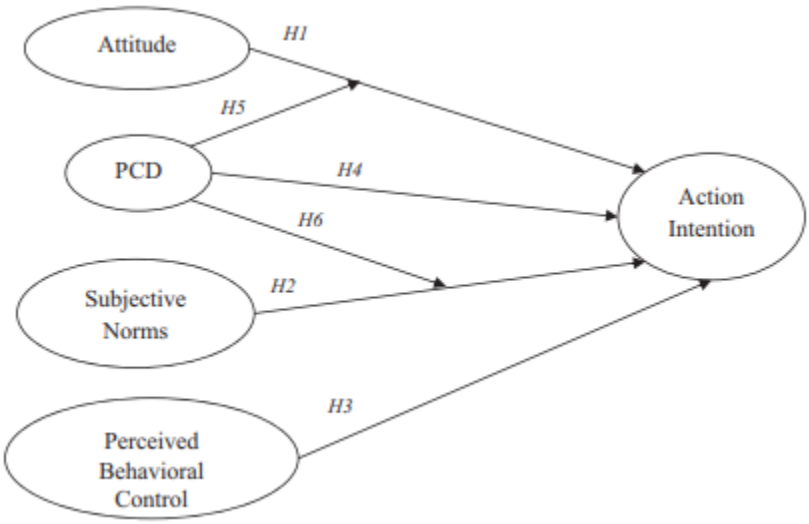

Figure 1. The proposed research framework
Note: PCD = Perceived counterfeit detection

Theoretical background and a goal-directed interactionist perspective

Past research and gaps

Prior research regarding deliberate counterfeit consumption has focused primarily on identifying factors that affect consumers' use and purchase of counterfeits (Tom *et al.*, 1998; Wee *et al.*, 1995) and has been addressed from differing perspectives such as personal, economic, ethical and socio-psychological (Bian *et al.*, 2016; Sharma and Chan, 2011). However, several gaps remain. First, the majority of findings are fragmented and descriptive, and offer only limited insights into deliberate counterfeit consumption's motivational processes.

Second, studies using theoretical frameworks – including the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action – fail to provide a uniform, integrated framework to explain the motivational processes of self-regulatory, goal-directed behavior. The majority of studies, with few exceptions (Wilcox *et al.*, 2009), have neglected the motivational processes that govern decisions and stimulate action (Penz *et al.*, 2009; Penz and Stöttinger, 2005). Knowledge of consumers' motivational processes, however, is crucial for understanding goal-directed, self-regulatory behavior (Bagozzi, 1992; Wu, 2011). Also, the studies to date are not integrated because they have mainly addressed only the attitude-intention link of the three key links in attitude theories (attitude-intention, subjective norm-intention, and intention-behavior) (Wilcox *et al.*, 2009; Yoo and Lee, 2009). For example, by using functional theories of attitudes (Katz, 1960), Wilcox *et al.* (2009) have demonstrated that consumers' social motivations strongly relate to their desire for counterfeit luxury brands. However, Wilcox *et al.* (2009) have addressed only the attitude-intention relationship. To date, a lack of theoretical uniformity in a number of studies results in what appears to be an *ad hoc* or "unlimited" addition of many variables to explain consumer behavior, sometimes referred to as the "other variables" approach (Bagozzi, 1992 p. 1). This makes standardizing and generalizing results difficult (Bagozzi, 1992). For example, lacking a more integrated and uniform framework, Penz and Stöttinger (2005) are compelled to include a total of nine "other variables" to the theory of planned behavior, including smart shoppers, defending counterfeiters, fashion involvement, embarrassment potential, self-identity, price consciousness, and ethical predisposition to explain key drivers of the demand for counterfeits.

Third, much consumer behavior is goal-directed; consumers set goals and behave in ways that help them meet or manage their goals (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999). However, most of the past studies do not clearly treat consumers' deliberate counterfeit consumption as a goal-directed behavior nor examine it from a goal-directed perspective, not to mention from our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective.

Deliberate counterfeit consumption as goal-directed behavior

Within the framework of goal-directed behavior, deliberate counterfeit consumption can be viewed as the means to fulfill certain goals. To meet different goals (social-adjustive vs value-expressive; attainment vs maintenance; professional vs personal), consumers take a series of actions that often rely on choices that the marketplace provides. Today's marketplace offers consumers many choices; they can choose from either counterfeit or genuine luxury brands or imitation goods. Therefore, if consumers choose to knowingly buy and use counterfeits – even though some counterfeits are more expensive than imitation goods – they engage in voluntary and self-regulatory behavior.

Goal-directed behavior begins with goal setting, followed by goal striving and goal realization (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999). Bagozzi and Edwards (2000) describe goal setting as "the deliberative processes one goes through in weighing reasons for acting, which culminates in a goal intention" (p. 255). Goal intention links the goal-setting and goal-striving stages. The goal-striving stage is defined as "the implementation and self-regulation of one's end-state intentions and instrumental acts linked to goal attainment" (Bagozzi and Edwards, 2000, p. 255). Goal intention in and of itself does not specify the particular actions needed in the goal-striving phase for goal realization (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999). To achieve their goals, consumers need to convert their goal intentions into action intentions (known as behavioral intentions in the theory of planned behavior), their action intentions into actions, and their actions into goal realization. (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999; Wu *et al.*, 2016).

A goal-directed interactionist perspective of deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior

In addition to viewing deliberate counterfeit consumption to be a goal-directed behavior, we propose a goal-directed *interactionist* perspective. We do this for several reasons. First, the traditional theoretical framework within the domain of ethical decision-making is based on recognizing an ethical problem (Hunt and Vitell, 1986) and in this instance presumes a consumer's ability to recognize counterfeit consumption as a moral issue. A person "who fails to recognize a moral issue will fail to employ moral decision making schemata" (Glass and Wood, 1996, p. 1189). However, in a non-deceptive counterfeit-consumption context, strictly applying such theoretical frameworks may not be feasible. One reason is that not all consumers may view counterfeit consumption as a moral issue. This standpoint is consistent with research related to the moral stages of development (Kohlberg, 1969). For example, Kohlberg (1969) finds that individual components such as education, age and socio-economic status are correlated with the stages of moral development (e.g. pre-conventional: paying for a benefit; conventional: law and order morality; post-conventional: universal ethical principles).

Second, studies regarding situational variables' ability to predict counterfeit consumption behaviors have largely been absent, not to mention studies regarding important interactions among situational and individual variables. Understanding such interactive processes will not only raise average levels of ecological and responsible behavior, but will also make possible "[…] a tentative explanation of differences in environmental behavior at an intrasubject level: The same person may act differently in one set of conditions than in another" (Corraliza and Berenguer, 2000. pp. 836-837). For example, as considerable evidence indicates that many individuals do not view software piracy as an ethical problem, Glass and Wood (1996) use equity theory to predict situational factors' influences on subjects' intentions to engage in software piracy. Glass and Wood's (1996) view that both outcome and input situational variables have a significant effect on whether or not an individual intends to carry out software piracy accords with equity theory's predictions.

Third, according to our proposed perspective, decision-makers often recognize that both temptation (e.g. the symbolic value of using counterfeits) and risk (e.g. potential detection) may arise during the decision-making process. Therefore, given the uncertainties of this process, they may deploy considerable effort to make decisions in a dynamic and process-oriented manner. For example, even though much literature has demonstrated the advantages of setting

goals, Schweitzer *et al.* (2004), in a laboratory experiment, examined how setting goals can motivate unethical behavior, and reported that participants who were given mere or rewarded goals are more likely to overstate their productivity—an unethical behavior – than those who were asked to do their best. They show that this relationship proves to be true regardless of any economic incentives. Similarly, if social-adjustive goals motivate consumers to buy luxury brands for image-related reasons to maximize rewards in their external environment (e.g. status or mate seeking), they actually are more likely to buy counterfeit luxury brands as substitutes for their genuine counterparts. This holds especially true when they lack resources and when buying counterfeits suggests to them that they are making progress toward their goals. However, as they also want to minimize risks (e.g. functional and social risks associated with using counterfeit products), they may prefer to buy higher quality counterfeit products with smaller logos, which in turn affects PCD.

Blending insights from the above theories and literature, we advance a framework from a goal-directed interactionist perspective. This framework considers consumers' deliberate purchase and use of counterfeits as goal-directed dynamic behaviors; we view this deliberate counterfeit consumption as a set of decisions, processes, and activities, constituted by goal setting, goal striving and goal attainment, possessing self-regulation and interaction input. Such a framework is best suited to provide a comprehensive and integrated explanation for deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior. Specifically, from a goal-directed interactionist perspective, this research emphasizes the personal, interpersonal, situational and interactive mechanisms by which the decision-making process influences deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior during the goal-striving stage.

Hypothesis development

Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and action intention

As factors that play an important role in the goal-striving phase correspond to key constructs in the theory of planned behavior (Bagozzi, 2010), we integrate the theory of planned behavior and insights from goal-directed behaviors to develop our first three hypotheses. According to the theory of planned behavior, three antecedents directly influence behavioral intention in the form of a consumer's intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits. These three antecedents are attitudes (e.g. attitude toward deliberate counterfeit consumption), subjective norms (e.g. the consumer perceives subjective normative pressure from important others regarding deliberate counterfeit consumption), and perceived behavioral control (e.g. the consumer's perceived degree of ease or difficulty in buying a counterfeited brand) (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). However, the behavioral intention referred to in the theory of planned behavior (e.g. the intent to buy counterfeits) is called action intention when viewed from the perspective of goal-directed behavior as actions (e.g. buying counterfeits) are not taken so much as ends in themselves, but as the means to more essential ends or goals (e.g. to enhance self-image) (Wu, 2011).

Specifically, as a dispositional (attitudinal) factor, a consumer's favorable attitude toward deliberate counterfeit consumption comprises reasons for acting. Therefore, attitude is proposed to positively affect the consumer's action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits (*H1*). By

the same token, as subjective norms are associated with social influences, the more the consumer perceives unfavorable subjective normative pressure from others who are important to them with regard to deliberate counterfeit consumption, the weaker the consumer's action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits (*H2*). In contrast, because perceived behavioral control refers to one's perception of the degree of ease or difficulty in performing a particular behavior (e.g. finding a place to buy a counterfeited brand in this case) (Ajzen, 1991), it can directly influence a consumer's action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits (*H3*). Thus:

> *H1.* Attitude toward deliberate counterfeit consumption is positively associated with purchase intention on counterfeits.
>
> *H2.* Favorable subjective norm regarding deliberate counterfeit consumption is positively associated with purchase intention on counterfeits.
>
> *H3.* Perceived behavioral control over the deliberate purchase of counterfeits is positively associated with purchase intention on counterfeits.

Perceived counterfeit detection

We propose and justify PCD as an important construct in predicting deliberate counterfeit brand consumption for several reasons. First, from a substantive perspective, PCD is an important contextual factor in deliberate counterfeit consumption. According to the situation perception research (Rauthmann *et al.*, 2018), factors from the environment can be classified as situational cues. Factors or situational cues from the environment that may affect an individual's PCD include the consumption situation of counterfeits (i.e. public vs private), a counterfeit item's product characteristics (i.e. functional vs symbolic), perceived product quality of counterfeits and, important, others' ability to detect counterfeits.

However, from a conceptual and situation research perspective (e.g. psychological situation characteristics) (Rauthmann *et al.*, 2018), these situational cues may not have much meaning unless they are processed and perceived by an individual, from situation cues into psychological situation characteristics. Therefore, a perceptual or conceptual system must be applied to give them meaning. As previously discussed, such an interactionist perspective – which could provide additional insight – has never been used to explain counterfeit purchase behavior.

Second, in line with both Heisenberg's view that "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning" (Heisenberg, 1958, p. 81) and the view that latent variable structural equation modeling procedures increase broad-based conceptual practices (Jarvis *et al.*, 2003), many researchers currently prefer using unobservable latent constructs over directly observable concepts (Niehoff, 1998). For example, evaluators frequently require the use of broad unobservable latent constructs such as socioeconomic status (i.e. SES), rather than observable responses to single items such as income, education and occupational prestige. By the same token, this study prefers to use a certain degree of abstraction and to use PCD as a latent construct. PCD integrates information from factors such as consumption contexts (public vs private), counterfeit items' product characteristics (functional vs symbolic), customer product knowledge, and other people's counterfeit detection ability. Therefore, the present

conceptualization of PCD as a latent construct provides the building blocks for advancing knowledge (Gilliam and Voss, 2013; MacInnis, 2011; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) and permits future research to capture indicators that underscore PCD and other constructs (e.g., perceived software piracy detection) that share the same or similar antecedents, mechanisms and consequences. As Niehoff (1998, pp. 1-2) states, we "[…] filter our observations through concepts." These abstract concepts allow academics and practitioners to analyze and discuss unobservable phenomenon in an organized manner (Edwards and Bagozzi, 2000). For example, from a nomological network perspective, this paper not only theoretically and empirically demonstrates PCD's existence, but also shows how PCD can be included in other theories (e.g. the theory of planned behavior) while differing from—and under certain conditions interacting with—other theories' key constructs (e.g. subjective norms and perceived behavioral control).

Perceived counterfeit detection and action intention

We expect PCD to be negatively associated with action intention (*H4*). When PCD is high (vs low), consumers perceive a greater chance to be found out by important others about their use of counterfeit products. As discussed earlier, purchasing counterfeit products involves both benefits (e.g. the symbolic value of using counterfeits) and risks (e.g. potential detection). High levels of PCD outweigh benefits and therefore reduce action intention. Consistent with our argument, previous research on music piracy shows that perceived risk of being caught negatively associated with individuals' tendency to engage in music piracy (Wang *et al.*, 2011):

> *H4.* Perceived counterfeit-detection is negatively associated with purchase intention on counterfeits.

A key difference between PCD and perceived behavioral control is that perceived behavioral control mainly focuses on the "purchasing" rather than "consuming" aspect of consumer behavior (Chang, 1998; Staake *et al.*, 2009). In contrast, PCD considers the "consuming" rather than "purchasing" aspect of consumer behavior. Because of this difference, their roles and relationships with other factors in the decision-making processes may differ. For instance, because of its focus on the "purchasing" aspect, perceived behavioral control is more related to gains/losses at the personal level, such as ease-of-purchase and capacity to evaluate product quality. Conversely, because PCD focuses more on the "consuming" aspect, it is more related to social gains (e.g. recognition from friends) or losses (e.g. expulsion by friends following detection), thus further supporting our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective and justifying the need to identify a construct like PCD in this research domain.

The moderating role of perceived counterfeit detection

To further illustrate the importance and usefulness of our proposed perspective and PCD, we explore how PCD as a moderator interacts with other variables proposed above. One interactionist perspective relates to the degree of conflict between PCD and other personal and interpersonal variables (attitude and subjective norm in this case). In our study's context we apply Corraliza and Berengue's (2000) logic and argue that conflict will be high when there is a high personal or interpersonal disposition toward intention or action (e.g. favorable attitude and subjective norm toward deliberate counterfeit consumption), but that the situation (high PCD)

will make the intention or action difficult. Conversely, conflict will be low when personal or interpersonal disposition to act is low and the situation (low PCD) facilitates the action. This interaction perspective can help explain the heterogeneity among consumers in different contexts: why is counterfeit consumption more common in certain countries or groups than in others?

We expect that consumers' attitudes have a weaker effect on action intention when PCD is high rather than low. In situations where PCD is high, consumers' motivation to engage in counterfeit consumption is decreased, despite their high levels of positive attitudes toward counterfeit consumption; one major reason is that high PCD poses threats to the potential social benefits associated with using counterfeit products. Consistent with our argument, previous studies show that social motivation (e.g. social-adjustive goals) is a major driver of consumers' desire for counterfeit luxury brands (Wilcox *et al.*, 2009) to simultaneously maximize rewards (e.g. status or mate seeking, being accepted by a preferred reference group member) in their external environment and minimize risks. In contrast, when PCD is low, social risks associated with being caught by important others are low, and therefore, positive attitudes toward counterfeit products can enhance the intention to purchase these products. Thus:

> *H5.* PCD weakens the positive effect of attitude toward deliberate counterfeit consumption on purchase intention of counterfeits.

Similarly, consumers with different levels of PCD may display different levels of responsiveness to subjective norms toward deliberate counterfeit consumption. That PCD and subjective norms are demonstrably different constructs is worth noting. While subjective norms are related to individuals' perception of what important others think they should do (Ajzen, 1991), PCD captures how difficult it is for others to detect the counterfeit nature of products. We believe that the interplay of PCD and subjective norms may work in one of two directions. A first direction is that PCD would weaken the effect of subjective norms on action intention. When PCD is high (and thus social risks associated with using counterfeit products are high), consumers may downplay what important others believe they should do. In other words, PCD mitigates the influence of subjective norms:

> *H6.* PCD weakens the positive effect of subjective norms on purchase intention of counterfeits.

However, another direction or competing hypothesis is just as likely: the impact of subjective norms is so strong that PCD does not play a moderating role in the relationship between subjective norms and action intention. Previous research shows that mimicking the behaviors of important others helps people discount the perceived risk of music piracy (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Given that a major driver of music piracy is to gain social benefits (Wang *et al.*, 2011), the possibility of counterfeit consumption's underlying social motives overriding PCD's moderation effects is very likely. We expect that those who are influenced by a high level of subjective norms may imitate their peers and may minimize the threat of PCD. They are likely to view counterfeit consumption behavior as acceptable or believe purchasing counterfeit products may enhance their self-image or social status. Thus, PCD has less "corrective power" on the effects of subjective norms. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H6 competing hypothesis. PCD does not weaken the positive effect of subjective norms on purchase intention of counterfeits.

Method

Research design and data collection

This paper used part of the data set and variables from its first author's dissertation (Wu, 2011). To develop a self-administered paper questionnaire to investigate the proposed model and hypotheses for deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior, we used literature review and in-depth interviews to identify and modify information pertaining to this study's content and process (e.g. scales for measuring variables, typical luxury brand categories from which participants have frequently and knowingly purchased counterfeits, the purchasing seasons and cycles of the counterfeits). For example, in a semi-structured manner, we conducted eight in-depth interviews with three Beijing college students, two Chinese general consumers and three US consumer behavior researchers. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 min. Through literature review (Ajzen, 1991; Aleassa *et al.*, 2011; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2003; Chang, 1998; Staake *et al.*, 2009) and the in-depth interviews, we identified and selected four typical luxury brand categories: apparel, handbags, shoes, and purses. Note that even though "handbags" and "purses" may be used interchangeably in English, feedback from the interviews clarified that they belong to two different categories in Chinese. Compared with a purse, a "handbag" in Chinese is a larger accessory. Also, because the Chinese translation for "handbags," "purses" and "wallets" refers to both men's and women's accessories, we used "apparel, handbags, shoes, and purses" (rather than "apparel, handbags, shoes, and purses/wallets"). This distinction kept the categories simpler when referring to the four typical luxury brand categories identified for this research. We also included an "other product category" in case the four identified categories did not apply to a particular participant, resulting in a total of five categories used in the questionnaire.

We conducted the survey and data collection in the following manner. We modified scales from past studies (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2003; Shaw *et al.*, 2007) and obtained information from the in-depth interviews. Next, we developed a questionnaire in English, translated it into Chinese, and pretested the questionnaire three times, applying the back-translation technique (Brislin *et al.*, 1973). Using a cross-sectional self-administered paper survey, we collected data from students attending four universities in Beijing, China for three reasons. First, to satisfy the aim of this research study, one needs direct access to a group of consumers who are likely to be familiar with deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior, or who live in an environment where counterfeit consumption is common. Chinese consumers in general and Beijing college students in particular, meet both criteria (Wu, 2011). They are both familiar with counterfeit-brand consumption as purchasing and using counterfeits in China is common and well known (Wilcox *et al.*, 2009; Wu, 2011).

Second, college students are considered suitable for this study as they are believed to use counterfeit products frequently (Cordell *et al.*, 1996). Previous research on the demand-side of counterfeiting has widely used student samples; 16 out of 28 previous articles have used students as respondents according to a counterfeiting review paper by Eisend and Schuchert-Güler

(2006). More importantly, using college students as a convenience sample is reasonable and widely accepted as this research focuses on testing important latent constructs (such as PCD) during consumers' decision-making processes, rather than considering factors such as demographic characteristics (Wu, 2011).

Third, using one empirical study with appropriate respondents for this current study is sufficient as this research study focuses primarily on theory development by introducing the PCD construct. Christensen and Carlile (2009, p. 246) assert that:

> […] it is simply impossible to establish a theory's external validity by testing it on data. There will always be another set upon which it hasn't yet been tested, and the future will always lie just beyond the reach of data.

Sample characteristics

Of the 1,195 questionnaires distributed to participants, 188 students elected not to participate, resulting in 1,007 completed responses. Based on the visual inspection of the raw data, 120 responses were excluded due to one or more of the following reasons:

1. A participant's chosen product was not included in the counterfeits defined in the study (e.g. books).
2. Some participants answered questions randomly or illogically (straight-lining).

After following the typical procedures for data screening and common method bias checks (missing data, outliers, normality) and excluding three multivariate outliers (Byrne, 2010), 991 responses were kept.

For several reasons we used a qualifying question for "error control" at the end of the survey, asking participants to reply to the statement, "I honestly responded to the questions in this questionnaire" (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). For example, because we were not very certain how honestly participants would answer their questionnaires, explicitly eliciting participant responses from their perspectives might be a better option than making an arbitrary assumption without actually measuring participant responses. In addition, some participants might not be honest in answering their questionnaires for various reasons: difficulty saying "no" verbally or in person when requested to take this questionnaire, insufficient time and attention to answer questions, and impression management concerns regarding deliberate counterfeit consumption. However, other factors might have elicited an honest answer when responding to the final qualifying question: participants' increased attention due to realizing they have almost completed the questionnaire, and a shift in their attention from counterfeit consumption *per se* to the purpose, objective, and meaning of this study.

After keeping those who replied with "strongly agree" for the qualifying question, 258 valid responses were kept for analysis. The typical respondent in this sample (*N = 258)* was female (53.5 per cent); 21-23 years old (50.4 per cent); a college junior (29.5 per cent); not working (84.5 per cent); and having an annual household income of Chinese yuan (CNY) ranging from

CNY 10,000 (US$1,564) to CNY 29,999 (US$4,695) (15.1 per cent), among those who reported their income.

Measures in the proposed model

Attitude toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits was measured with seven-point semantic differential scales: bad–good, foolish–wise, harmful–beneficial, useless-useful, disadvantageous–advantageous, punishing-rewarding, and negative-positive (Aleassa *et al.*, 2011; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2003; Wu, 2011). Respondents were asked to reply to the statement: "I believe that buying a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category is _____".

Using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree, we measured subjective norm toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits with the following five items adapted from Aleassa *et al.*(2011) and Bagozzi *et al.* (2003):

1. Most people who are important in my life would understand my decision to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
2. Most people who are important in my life would agree with my decision to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
3. Most people who are important in my life would approve of me buying a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
4. Most people who are important in my life would support me in buying a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
5. Most people who are important in my life would encourage me to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.

Consumers' perceived behavioral control toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits was measured using three items adapted from Bagozzi *et al.* (2003):

1. If I wanted to, I could easily buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
2. It would not be difficult for me to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
3. There are no barriers to prevent me from buying a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.

A seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree was used for all three items.

The scale for measuring consumers' PCD consisted of three items, based on Fischer's (2002) paper:

1. Important others around me will sense when I'm wearing a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.
2. Important others around me will be able to recognize when I'm wearing a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.

3. Important others around me can detect when I'm wearing a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category.

A seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree was used for all three items.

We measured participants' action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits with the following three items adapted from Bagozzi *et al.* (2003):

1. I intend to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category during the next one year (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).
2. It is likely that I will buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category during the next one year (1 = very unlikely; 7 = very likely).
3. Within the next one year, the strength of my intention to buy a counterfeit brand product from my chosen product category can best be described as _____" (1 = very weak; 7 = very strong).

Results

We used a two-step covariance-based structural equation modeling approach (SEM) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2003) to test the proposed model and the direct effects of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and PCD on their action intentions to deliberately purchase counterfeits. We used a regression-based path analysis to test PCD's moderating effects (Hayes, 2013). All the variables were standardized so that their effect sizes could be compared readily. Specifically, we presented the results of the measurement model first, followed by the results of the structural model and the regression-based path analysis.

Measurement model results

Using the AMOS 21 software package to analyze the study's data, we used confirmatory factor analysis to validate the measurement model and applied the following four goodness-of-fit indices to assess the model fit: chi-square test, the non-normed fit index (NNFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results for the overall measurement model fit were χ^2 (df = 142, n = 258) = 524.686, p = 0.000; RMSEA = 0.102; NNFI = TLI = 0.871; CFI = 0.893. These indices were in the acceptable range though they could be further improved. Although factor loading for constructs were significant (p = 0.001), and most of them were high (ranging from 0.637 to 0.990), we followed the steps used to examine and improve measurement model fit, including examining statistical significance of loading, size of indicator loading, standardized residual covariances and modification indices for covariances and regression weights (Byrne, 2010). As a result, we identified and deleted low-loading items. The deleted low-loading items were "punishing/rewarding," "disadvantage/advantageous," "useless/useful," and "foolish/wise" (used to measure attitude); "understand with my decision to buy a counterfeit brand product" and "approve of me buying a counterfeit brand product" (used to measure subjective norm); and "would easily buy a counterfeit brand product" (used to measure perceived behavioral control).

As a result, the modified model revealed great improvement of fit indices: χ^2(df = 67, n = 258) = 105.445, p = 0.002; RMSEA = 0.047; NNFI = TLI = 0.981; CFI = 0.986; and all factor loading for constructs were significant (p = 0.001) and high (ranging from 0.712 to 0.978). A review of the modification indices and standardized residual covariances revealed that no further model modification was needed.

Table I shows that the factors in the proposed model demonstrate adequate validity and reliability, using measures such as composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table I. Construct reliability and validity scores and correlations among constructs

	CR	**AVE**	**MSV**	**ASV**	**Attitude**	**PCD**	**SN**	**Intention**	**PBC**
Attitude	0.926	0.808	0.236	0.121	0.899				
PCD	0.903	0.758	0.054	0.030	−0.189	0.871			
SN	0.913	0.778	0.280	0.153	0.486	−0.172	0.882		
Intention	0.920	0.793	0.280	0.129	0.413	−0.232	0.529	0.891	
PBC	0.857	0.751	0.067	0.029	0.200	−0.012	0.258	0.099	0.866

Notes: PCD = perceived counterfeit detection, SN = subjective norms, PBC = perceived behavioral control, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, MSV = maximum shared variance, ASE = average shared variance; Cronbach Alpha is on the backend diagonal

In short, all the above results provide evidence of measurement model fit, as well as discriminant and convergent validity regarding measures of the model's latent constructs, thus permitting confidence in moving on to the SEM analysis. The comparison between the average variance extracted (AVE) within a latent construct and the measurement error-adjusted shared interconstruct correlation (SIC) reported from the CFA was used to check for discriminant validity. As seen on Table I, the AVE values exceeded the shared variance between each variable and all other constructs in the model, indicating the presence of discriminant validity.

Structural model results

The goodness-of-fit measures show that the data fit well with regard to the structural model: χ^2 (df = 67, n = 258) = 105.445; p = 0.002; RMSEA = 0.047; NNFI = TLI = 0.981; CFI = 0.986. As such, the study proceeded with the testing of the hypothesized relationships. Results demonstrated that *H1*, *H2* and *H4* were significant in their expected directions (*H1*: β = 0.192, t = 2.929, p = 0.003; *H2*: β = 0.428, t = 6.253, p = 0.001; *H4*: β = −0.123, t = −2.149, p = 0.032). However, *H3* was not supported (p = 0.412).

To secure additional support for the validity of our proposed model, we performed tests with demographic variables as the control variables, including sex, age, category, and annual household gross income. The procedures treated each demographic variable as a manifest variable and added a direct path from the demographic variable to the outcome variable (action intention) in the model. If an additional direct path not initially included in the model was significant, then we controlled for the effect of the corresponding demographic variable and kept it in the SEM model (Wu, 2011). Results show that none of the demographic variables was significantly associated with action intention regarding deliberate counterfeit purchases. Overall, based on the current results in the SEM model alone without including the results of PCD's

moderating effects, approximately 32.9 per cent of the variance in action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits was explained by the model.

Results of perceived counterfeit detection's moderating effects

We used the PROCESS macro to test the moderating-only effects for several reasons. First, we are only interested in the parameter estimations from attitude and subjective norms to action intentions but not the entire model estimation. Structural equation analyzes the "entire system of equations simultaneously through iterations, typically using a maximum likelihood" (Hayes *et al.*, 2017, p. 78) estimation technique, which does not estimate the parameters of each moderation equation independently. Our goal was not to test whether PCD moderates the entire model, but to ascertain whether the two independent paths are moderated by PCD. While structural equation cannot estimate these two equations independently, PROCESS is one of the computational tools that allows us to estimate moderating effects separately:

> PROCESS estimates each equation separately, meaning that the estimation of the regression parameters in one of the equations has no effect on the estimation of the parameters in any other equations defining the model (Hayes *et al.*, 2017, p. 77).

Hence, our rational for using the PROCESS macro to test the moderating-only effects.

Second, a discrete variable is the best moderator candidate in structural equation modeling moderation (Little *et al.*, 2007). Little *et al.* (2007) acknowledge that discrete variables used as moderators should be analyzed using multiple-group approaches. Historically, structural equation modeling did not permit moderators as latent variables until the advent of latent moderated structural equations (LMS) method (Maslowsky *et al.*, 2015). However, the LMS method is an application only built into the Mplus software but is not available in AMOS, LISREL, EQS, R, or even SAS. In addition, the conditional process models involving creating a product term by having at least one interaction between latent variables remains highly controversial. Moreover:

> […] it can be difficult to trust a model which involves estimating latent variable interactions because it is difficult to determine whether the resulting estimates of interactions are reasonable. Making things worse, different methods can produce different results and are vulnerable to assumption violations (Hayes *et al.*, 2017).

As such, the PROCESS macro is highly recommended for dealing with independent moderation model estimation.

Before using a regression-based path analysis to test PCD's moderating effects (Hayes, 2013), we converted those latent variables in our model into composite variables using the regression imputation approach in AMOS. Next we used the PROCESS analysis to test PCD's moderating effect (Hayes, 2013). Results show that attitudes and PCD interact significantly to influence consumers' action intentions ($\beta = -0.144$, $t = -2.994$, $p = 0.003$). That is, PCD moderates the impact of consumers' attitudes toward deliberate counterfeit consumption on consumers' action intentions toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits. In other words, high

PCD weakens the effect of attitudes on action intentions. Therefore, *H5* is supported. To have a pictorial explanation of the moderating effects, we plotted regression lines for the relationship between attitudes and action intention when the moderating variable PCD was low (one standard deviation below the mean) and high (one standard deviation above the mean). As shown in Figure 2, the positive effects of attitudes on action intention only occur when PCD is low. When PCD is high, action intention does not differ across high and low attitudes.

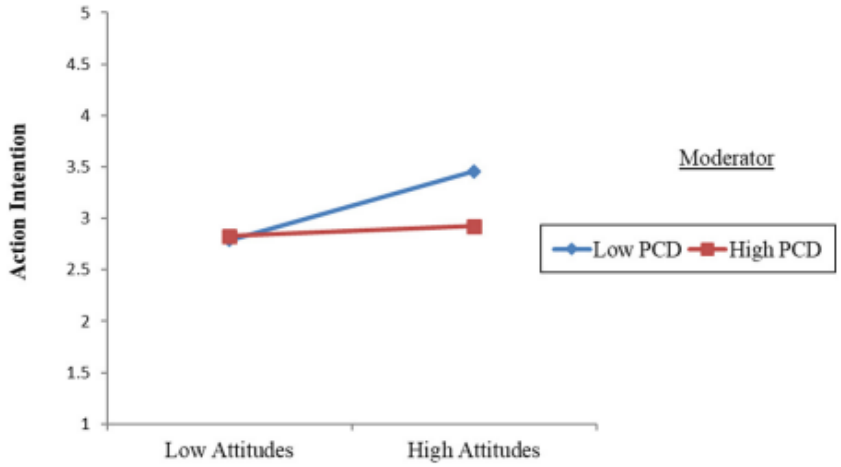

Figure 2. Moderation effect of PCD on the relationship between attitudes and action intention

Although the results were in the expected direction, they nonetheless show an insignificant moderating effect for the interaction between subjective norms and PCD on action intentions ($\beta = -0.054$, $t = -1.53$, $p = 0.127$). That is, PCD fails to moderate the impact of consumers' subjective norms toward deliberate counterfeit consumption on consumers' action intentions toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits. Therefore, *H6* is not supported, meaning that its competing hypothesis is supported. We plotted Figure 3 to visualize the moderating role of PCD in the effects of subjective norms on action intention. As shown in Figure 3, the effects of subjective norms on action intention are significant in both high and low PCD situations.

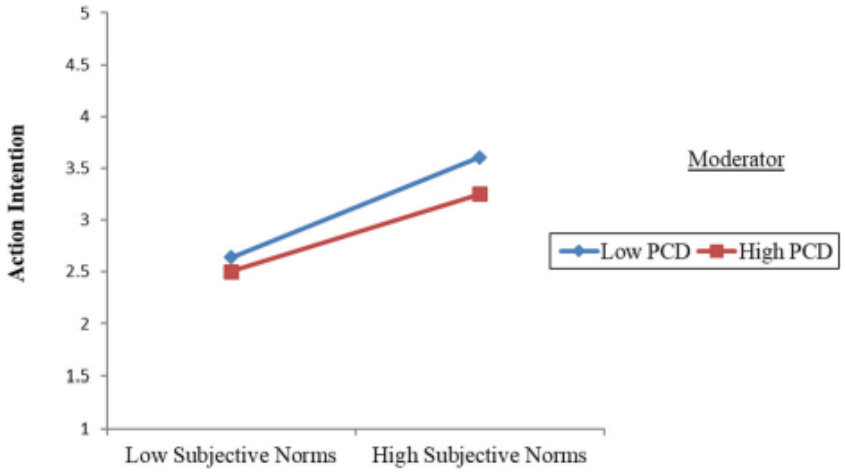

Figure 3. Moderation effect of PCD on the relationship between subjective norms and action intention

Robustness checks

To check the robustness of the results, we conducted location estimators by estimating the presence of outliers that could contaminate the mean value of our observations. Several statistical approaches, including box plots, scatterplots and the Mahalanobis distance, were used to observe responses unrepresentative of the sample. Results consistently indicate no contaminated responses that might skew the observation at the univariate, bivariate or multivariate structure of the dataset.

To further validate the robustness of the results, the hypotheses were validated using ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation. Given that OLS estimation attempts to minimize the error of the model, while maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) maximizes the parameters of the model, both estimation techniques can occasionally produce different findings (Hayes *et al.*, 2017). Results from the OLS analysis correspond to results from the MLE model, indicating consistency in our findings and further supporting our robustness checks.

In short, this study's empirical results demonstrate PCD's existence and overall support for its refined model. Figure 4 presents findings from the overall analysis. It reports standardized regression weights (path coefficients), *p*-values, and R^2, and presents these results and the model used in this study's context.

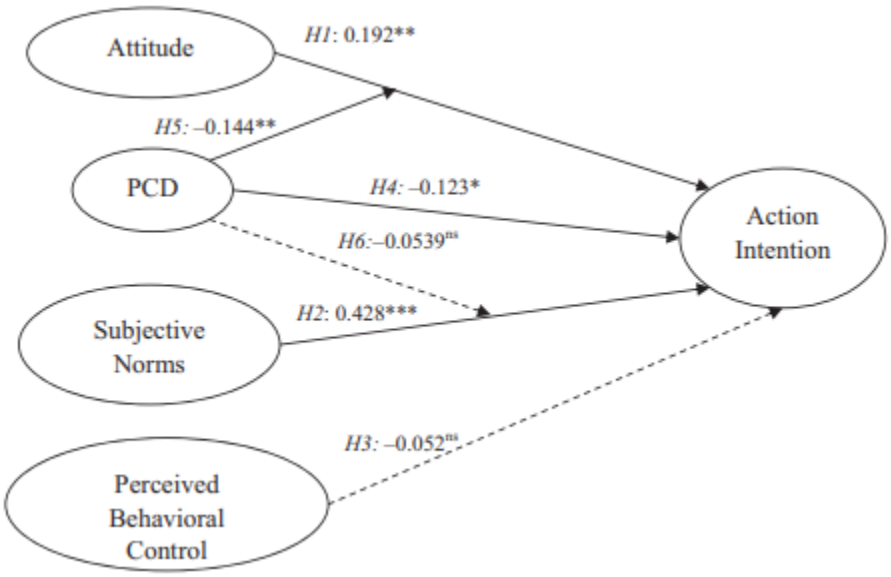

Figure 4. Findings from the overall analysis
Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$. ^{ns}signifies not significant. Solid lines indicate significant and supported hypotheses, while dash-lines indicate insignificant and rejected hypotheses

General discussion

The central focus of this study is to understand our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective and interrelationships between consumers' PCD and their decision-making processes toward deliberate counterfeit consumption. Results demonstrate PCD's existence and show that

PCD not only negatively and directly affects consumers' action intentions to deliberately purchase counterfeits, but also moderates the impact of consumers' attitudes toward deliberate counterfeit consumption on consumers' action intentions toward deliberate purchase of counterfeits. PCD's direct influence on action intention toward the deliberate purchase of counterfeits indicates that PCD reflects a counterfeit-brand consumer's sense of control over performing certain chosen actions (Wu, 2011). PCD's moderating role reflects the fact that it contains elements of both self-regulation and situation, enabling it to interact with other factors. Its negative effect demonstrates that PCD can serve as an inhibitor to act.

Among all the pathways in the research's empirically validated model, subjective norm had the strongest effect on the action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits ($\beta = 0.428$), with attitude having the next strongest effect on action intention ($\beta = 0.192$). The fact that subjective norm had a stronger effect than attitude in either motivating or inhibiting consumers' action intention to deliberately purchase counterfeits, might be attributable to China's collectivistic culture. This collectivistic culture stresses interdependence, cooperation and group goals; as a result, others' opinions (the subjective norm), rather than attitude, are expected to have a greater impact on individual behavior (Triandis, 1997). China's collectivistic culture, along with the effect of mimicking the behaviors of important others (Wang *et al.*, 2011), might explain why *H6*'s competing hypothesis is supported.

The weakest and surprisingly not-statistically-significant pathway occurred with perceived behavioral control's effect on action intention (*H3*). The layout of the three items used for measuring perceived behavioral control in the printed questionnaire might be the main reason why neither *H3* nor its expected direction were supported. Immediately after participants answered four similar items used for measuring a different latent construct, the first item for measuring perceived behavioral control was the last question on that page. Participants might have thought that the last question was similar to the preceding four questions and therefore selected a score close to these four questions, causing the first item (i.e. "If I wanted to, I could *easily* buy a *counterfeit brand product* from my chosen product category") to be less reliable and therefore excluded from further SEM analysis. The remaining two items used for measuring perceived behavioral control appeared on the next page. However, these two items were stated in a "double-negative" direction to express the statement in a "positive" direction (i.e. "It would *not be difficult* for me to buy a *counterfeit brand product* from my chosen product category," and "There are *no barriers* to prevent me from buying a *counterfeit brand product* from my chosen product category"). Participants usually need more time or effort to understand the "correct" direction for such questions when stated in Chinese, partially due to features associated with the Chinese language. For example, whereas English writing uses considerable punctuation to enhance writing clarity, emphasis, and meaning, etc.—which can affect readers' reading speed and understanding – Chinese writing uses far less punctuation. Therefore, some participants might have understood these two items in the "wrong" direction or thought that these two items – like many other items in this questionnaire – were stated in the straightforward and simple "positive direction," thereby explaining why neither *H3* nor its predicted direction were supported.

Theoretical contributions

This research makes several theoretical contributions. First and foremost, differing from other approaches (e.g. personal, economic and ethical), this research justifies an overlooked yet important goal-directed interactionist perspective and develops a refined and substantive framework including its proposed PCD construct. This framework provides opportunities to investigate behavior as an interpretative and dynamic process, vitalizing the domain of counterfeit-consumption behavior studies in particular and ethical behavior research in general. Compared with theoretical approaches such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the refined framework provides a relatively comprehensive, integrated, and dynamic explanation for deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior. This framework also provides greater, dynamic insights into the psychological processes that precede the outcome variable. Future studies can extend this framework to provide a more parsimonious explanation for human behavior. For example, it opens unexplored areas of study relating to illicit consumer behaviors by incorporating consumers' goals, choices and PCD principles regarding social awareness, behavioral visibility/transparency, and person-situation interaction. Future studies may apply PCD's mechanisms and characteristics and develop models associated with similar ethical contexts (e.g. software piracy, shoplifting and employee sabotage).

Second, at the construct level, the proposed hypothetical construct of PCD comprises the building blocks for knowledge advancement. Future studies of deliberate counterfeit consumption should consider the importance of PCD's integrative function regarding several concepts and factors such as consumption contexts (public vs private); counterfeit items' product characteristics (functional vs symbolic); perceived quality; and important others' knowledge of counterfeits. Also, the PCD construct has action significance as its label helps both academics and practitioners better classify the above deliberate counterfeit-consumption situations, thereby increasing the effectiveness of their responses. Researchers prefer to use unobservable latent constructs (e.g. PCD) over directly observable concepts (e.g. consumption contexts and counterfeit items' product characteristics), and the present conceptualization of PCD as an unobservable construct permits researchers to capture indicators that clearly underscore this and other constructs that share the same or similar antecedents, mechanisms, and consequences. Moreover, the development of latent variable SEM procedures also affords significantly stricter tests of PCD's and related constructs' discriminant and convergent validity and reliability (Jarvis *et al.*, 2003).

Finally, this research not only integrates the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) with goal-directed behavior theories and interactionist theory, but also extends these theories. This paper conceptually advances and refines our understanding of deliberate counterfeit consumption by identifying the conditions under which consumers will or will not deliberately consider buying counterfeits. This paper's theoretical advances are also important to knowledge development. Rather than testing theories incrementally (such as the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action), this research fosters the development of new ideas regarding our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective and PCD construct, which can be applied to other contexts and constructs that share the same or similar mechanisms and features. For example, compared with the theory of planned behavior, the present study demonstrates that PCD differs from the constructs of subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. We also show that PCD affects consumers' action intentions to deliberately purchase counterfeits and moderates the

relationship between consumers' attitudes and their action intentions toward deliberate counterfeit consumption.

Managerial contributions

This research makes several managerial contributions. According to our proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective, this research offers insights regarding why understanding consumers' different goals (e.g. social-adjustive vs value-expressive; attainment vs maintenance; professional vs personal) is important for marketers; how consumers' goals interplay with their choices through their actions and consumption (e.g. compete vs substitute); and why, how, and when their goals interact with their actions, choices, situations during their goal-setting, goal-striving, and goal-realization stages that may lead to unethical behavior.

At the construct level, the better marketers understand PCD, the more effectively they can use it. For example, genuine-brand manufacturers can work on making their brands more difficult to counterfeit by using all levels of brand protection approaches (e.g. complex production processes, secure packaging, hidden images, and microtext). The more difficult the counterfeiting of a genuine brand, the lower the perceived product quality of its counterfeit counterpart, and the higher the consumers' PCD. Also, enhancing the general public's knowledge with regard to detecting counterfeit counterparts from their genuine brands is worth the time and effort of genuine-brand manufacturers and their agencies, as increased public awareness will raise consumers' PCD as well.

At the level of relationships and procedures, this research can offer important insights for businesses that look for "best practices" in the fight against deliberate counterfeit consumption. With a better understanding of PCD's role, managers can enhance their ability to predict outcomes and can arrange environments to obtain desired outcomes (curtailing counterfeit consumption). The conceptual reasoning and empirical results pertaining to PCD indicate that effective strategies can be used to increase consumers' PCD, which in turn will reduce consumers' action intention to buy counterfeit brands (Wu, 2011). Moreover, this study's findings indicate that practitioners should make decisions and base specific strategies on research that is intended for a particular counterfeit context. Adhering to this policy will help prevent overgeneralizing or erroneously applying results and implications from one counterfeit context to another. For example, this study shows that significant others' opinions and behaviors were stronger than attitude in predicting Chinese consumers' intentions toward purchasing counterfeits. However, when such factors are examined in different cultural contexts and consumption situations (e.g. the USA vs China), action intention may differ in strength (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2000).

Limitations and future research

Despite its contributions, researchers need to consider the limitations of this study when interpreting its results, as well as when applying it to future research. The study was cross-sectional in nature; it could not provide direct evidence regarding participants' mental processes. Although SEM can provide some evidence to support causal relationships between constructs, SEM cannot be used alone to infer causality (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Future studies might consider

conducting controlled experimental research to manipulate the variables of interest and to address the aforementioned issues.

The study was conducted in Beijing, China, and caution should be taken when generalizing its research findings. Depending on the cultural and consumption situation, the impact of various factors, such as attitude and subjective norms might differ (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, conducting similar research in other countries to compare findings in their markets will help researchers better understand the impact of cultural factors, such as individualism and collectivism.

This paper is motivated by the specific substantive issue of consumers' deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior and focuses primarily on its conceptual interest by introducing the goal-directed interactionist perspective and the novel construct, PCD. One reason for this primary focus is that demanding both theory development and theory testing in each study can hinder further knowledge development (Hambrick, 2007; Yadav, 2010). Using this research's proposed goal-directed interactionist perspective, goal-striving model, and novel construct PCD as a basis, future studies can extend them – extending and testing our goal-striving model by considering goal setting, goal striving and goal realization together, for instance to provide a more comprehensive and integrated explanation for deliberate counterfeit-consumption behavior in particular and unethical behavior in general (e.g. software piracy, shoplifting and employee sabotage). Through a confluence of the substantive, conceptual and methodological domains of future projects by various researchers, we anticipate significant advancement in the knowledge base of ethical behavior research (e.g. counterfeit-consumption behavior) that takes us from descriptive frameworks to testable theories.

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