Effect of counterfeiting on Moroccan consumer behavior of luxury goods

Exploratory study

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ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the moroccan consumer’s behavior of luxury goods in the presence of counterfeiting. We study the different reactions of Moroccan behavior towards the original product, in a context overwhelmed by counterfeit products. We are thus exploring the behavior of resistance to counterfeiting, which is a phenomenon never dealt with, to our knowledge, in the Moroccan context. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted among Moroccan consumers of luxury goods, it revealed that there are many Moroccan consumers who resistant to counterfeiting but the reasons for this resistance vary and this is what we will detail in our article.

Keywords: Consumer Bahavior, Consumer Resistance, Counterfeiting, Luxury Products, Luxury Brands

L’effet de la contrefaçon sur le comportement marocain des produits de luxe

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article analyse le comportement du consommateur marocain des produits de luxe en présence de contrefaçon. Nous avons étudié les différentes réactions du comportement marocain envers le produit authentique, dans un contexte envahi par les produits contrefaits. Nous explorons ainsi le comportement de résistance à la contrefaçon, qui est un phénomène jamais traité, à notre connaissance, dans le contexte...
marocain. Une étude qualitative exploratoire a été menée auprès des consommateurs marocains de produits de luxe, elle a révélé qu'il existe de nombreux consommateurs marocains qui résistent à la contrefaçon mais les raisons de cette résistance peuvent varier d'un individu à un autre, chose que nous détaillons dans notre article.

**Mots clés**- Comportement du consommateur, Résistance du consommateur, Contrefaçon, Produits de luxe, Marques de luxe

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**INTRODUCTION**

Counterfeiting is a real social phenomenon in Morocco. The nonexistence of laws and regulations governing the field, the phenomenon has become widespread and now affects all sectors of activity. Indeed, in 2016 Morocco was ranked 11th exporter and 6th producer of counterfeit and pirated products by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). According to the same source, the 5 sectors most affected are: Textile, Leather, Electric, Automotive Spare Parts and Cosmetics. Counterfeiting is widespread in the luxury sector where consumers seek to obtain a good that looks like or recalls a socially valued property without paying the price; perfume, handbag, shoes... In these particular contexts, of luxury goods first and then the Moroccan context, we are wondering whether resistance to counterfeiting is possible, how it is done and what's are the motivations. This is what we have tried to understand through this exploratory study of the Moroccan consumer's resistance to counterfeiting.

**1- LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, we develop the two key concepts of our research: luxury goods counterfeiting and consumer resistance.

**1.1 Luxe luxury goods counterfeiting**

According to the CNAC (National Anti-Counterfeiting Committee), counterfeiting is defined as the reproduction, imitation or use of a trademark, a drawing, a patent, a software of copyright or a plant acquisition without the permission of its author. This legal definition of counterfeiting highlights two types of counterfeiting; the first type is to reproduce exactly the characteristics of the product in order to deceive the consumer into believing that he is buying an original. The second type is to imitate a product or its distinctive signs (logo, design, name...).
Eisend and Schuchert-Culer (2006) considers that counterfeiting occurs when a valuable product of a recognized brand present on the market is copied by another product that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two. The copied product is then presented at a lower price as if it were the original.

Grossman and Shapiro (1988) distinguish between deceptive and non-deceptive counterfeit. We will be interested in deceptive counterfeiting (when the customer can differentiate between fake and authentic products) in this work because our aim is to study consumer behavior in the presence of counterfeiting. For this, the consumer must be well aware of counterfeiting and deliberately decide whether to buy it or not.

Research on the impact of counterfeiting on consumers of the original products is quite rare and has mainly concerned luxury brands. Indeed, what makes luxury products more desired is scarcity and exclusivity (Twitchell (2002)), but counterfeiting spoils this since counterfeit products are more available and more accessible.

Many researchers have confirmed this need for recognition and self-image that consumers seek through the purchase of luxury goods. Veblen (1899) studied how rich people maintain or achieve a certain social status through the consumption of highly visible and high-value goods and use them to expose their wealth.

These observations have led some researchers to question whether counterfeiting has a negative effect on the consumer behavior of the original brand and on the brand itself.

Early research like the one of Nia and Zaichkowsky (2000), who questioned how the proliferation of counterfeits impacts the image of luxury brands and how consumers of original products think of their original products when they see that they exist in counterfeit terms. They found that respondents with a positive image of the original tended to perceive counterfeits as inferior, those who have a positive image of counterfeits do not consider them inferior products.

Commuri (2009) studied how consumers of authentic luxury goods are responding to the proliferation of counterfeits. The author found that consumers of authentic articles adopt one of three strategies when faced with counterfeits of their preferred brands: "flight, claim or "abranding".

In the Moroccan context, to our knowledge, there have been no studies that have studied the consumers of counterfeit products, except one relatively recent study (Siham Mourad and Pierre Valette-Florence, 2017) which analyzed consumers of the original luxury brands and studied the
consumer's relationship to their luxury brand in a context of counterfeiting. The authors proposed a new measure of the consumer's reaction to counterfeiting, they developed a PLS model that includes some history of this concept (need for uniqueness, integrity and relationship quality /price), attitude towards the brand, word of mouth and brand loyalty.

1.2 Consumer resistance

The term "consumer resistance" is relatively new in marketing as it was used for the first time in 1994 by the author Penaloza in his reference article "Consumer Resistance: A Conceptual Overview". He defined the concept as "how individuals and groups practice appropriation strategies in response to dominant structures" and proposed one of the first consumer resistance typologies in four dimensions:

- "Organizational dimension”: The action can be individual or collective,
- “Goals dimension”: radical or reformist nature,
- “Tactics dimension”: Resistance can be an action of alteration of the marketing mix, or an action of alteration of the "meaning" of the products
- "Relationship” dimension to marketing institutions

Resistance can involve the appropriation of marketing tools, which are used as instruments of resistance. The other way to resist is to go outside the market, using non-marketing institutions as a means of change.

Nevertheless, long before that, Hirshman1970, without using the term resistance, mentioned in his book "Exit, Voice and loyalty", how the consumer express a sense of dissatisfaction with the company. According to him, two options present themselves in this case to the consumer:

The "Exit" option: the consumer stops buying the company's products which causes a drop in income and management begins to look for the mistakes made that led to the "Exit"

The second option proposed by Hirchman is "Voice": Dissatisfied consumers express their displeasure by speaking directly to the management of the company or through general protests

Without talking about resistance, Hirchman referred to the "Exit" which is a form of resistance since the consumer deliberately chose not to buy the product.

Since the pioneering work of Penaloza 1993, several works have been followed to try to better understand an up to date new concept, that describes an interesting facet of consumer behavior.
Thus, (Fournier, 1998b) proposes a continuum of resistance from avoidance to rebellion (complaining, Boycott, abandoning), by passing by minimalist behavior (downsizing, coping strategy).

D.Roux, one of the key French authors in this area, has published several works on "consumer resistance". Hence, in 2005, he proposes a six-dimensional framework to categorize the their targets, the level of awareness of the process, the reasons behind them, their degree of individualism, their level of noise and their relative violence. The paper presents a synthesis of the different types of resistance proposed by the researchers.

In 2007, he offered a complete synthesis of all the main studies done on the subject of resistance since penzola's article 1997 to 2007. During this period, research is focused on the synthesis of research carried out (Literature Review) and exploration (qualitative studies to explore, understand the concept of resistance.

In 2011, D.Roux and al in his article "Anti-consumption and consumer resistance: concepts, concerns, conflicts and convergence" presents a detailed literature review to compare the two concepts "resistance" and "anti-consumption". It presents the points of resemblance and convergence between the two concepts.

Anti-consumption means literally against consumption (Zavestoski, 2002; Lee et al., 2009), the focus is always on consumption, or more precisely on phenomena that go against consumption processes. The author proposes a classification of anti-consumption into 3 non-exclusive phenomena: reject, restrict and recover. While rejecting is to avoid the consumption of certain goods, restricting concerns the reduction of the consumption of certain goods while recovery represents an ideological change in the processes of acquisition, use and dispossession.

In 2014 the author discusses an interesting concept that is "consumer propensity to resist" (PRC). A "new" concept for which he develops a two-dimensional scale of measurement capable of predicting market-critical bahaviors: Self-Assertion and Self-Protection with the determinants of each dimension. Thus, skepticism about advertising and persuasive knowledge are a common background to both dimensions of the PRC. On the other hand, the self-confidence is a specific antecedent of the PRC-Self affirmation, while psychological reactancy would rather predate the PRC-Self protection.

Other work has focused on targeted resistance: understanding and studying consumer resistance in specific contexts, such as resistance to certain forms of market by setting up alternative forms
of trade (Robert-Demontrond 2009), resistance to money donations (Urban et al. 2012), rejection of consumption and voluntary simplicity (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001; Shaw and Newholm 2002; Zavestoski 2002) and cyber resistance (Chalamon et al. 2012).

The trend of research on the subject remains dominated by literature review and exploration through qualitative studies which confirms the new, little-known character of the concept of resistance. However, since 2015, research on consumer resistance has become increasingly specific and has focused on the study of specific forms of resistance, consumer resistance in a specific sector or a specific practice. Since then, the research has been less general and more precise. Thus Roux 2015 was interested in the categorization of resistance practices defined by consumers themselves. Through a quantitative approach that includes frequency analysis, it highlights three categories of practices (resistant, non-resistant and ambivalent).

In 2016, the study of I Chouk and Z Mani appeared in DM, focused on the resistance to connected objects expressed by the consumer on the web. It sheds light on the brakes on the use of connected objects and the factors that may hinder their development. The netnographic study identified three types of resistance factors: system-related factors, connected object factors, and consumer-related factors. In addition, it highlighted two forms of expression of resistance: "conspiracy" discourse and "rational" discourse.

The lack today concerns the quantitative measurement of resistance. Indeed, there is currently no recognized, reliable and confirmed scale of measurement of consumer resistance, which makes modelling the concept more tedious.

2- EXPLORATORY STUDY

2.1 Study design

Since the concept of consumer resistance is relatively new, little-explored and studied in Morocco, we have chosen to go for an exploratory qualitative study in order to understand the Moroccan consumer's reaction to counterfeiting. The study aims to understand how the Moroccan consumer reacts to counterfeiting, resists it and what are the motivations, the manifestations and the implications of this resistance.
Luxury products are very numerous and categories are indefinite. In this work, we will be looking at the most counterfeit luxury categories; Textile and Leather (through accessories). We will also consider deliberate counterfeiting where the consumer chooses to buy a counterfeit item with full knowledge of the facts and finally for consumer resistance, we have chosen to study passive, individual and non-violent resistance.

Given the nature and sensitivity of our theme, we will choose our sample by the "snowball" technique. The sample size is determined by the saturation criterion.

The collection was carried out with 21 Moroccan consumers of luxury brands through individual interviews, supplemented by a focus group composed of 6 luxury consumers from different profiles.

The data is then collected over a period of 4 months until the information collected becomes redundant.

All interviews have been recorded and transcribed. The analysis of the data is done by the N-VIVO software and the analysis unit selected here is the theme.

Individuals have been selected according to the following criterion: they have already purchased at least one authentic luxury brand item in the last 12 months. Respondents are exclusively women as our subject concerns them much more than men. We had a sample with different profiles and different incomes that vary between 20,000 and 60,000 MAD per month, which corresponds to a CSP A in Morocco and which fits perfectly with our study subject that deals with luxury.

2.2 Study result

The results of our exploratory study confirm two major assumptions:

- The first and which has been confirmed several times in the literature is that the behavior of the Moroccan consumer of Luxury can be impacted by the presence of counterfeiting.

- The second one is that there are many consumers resistant to counterfeiting. Consumer resistance is a phenomenon that has been studied in the literature and its presence is attested. However, resistance to counterfeiting specifically, has never been studied hence the exploratory nature of our study.

The analysis in NVIVO software suggests that most consumers have a negative attitude towards counterfeiting. Describing it negatively with items like "I'm against," "it's cheating," "not good quality," "horrible," "to avoid" ... As can be seen in the word cloud generated by the software.
The moroccan consumer's bahavior of luxury goods is thus affected by the presence of counterfeit goods. Most respondents say they don't opt for a product that exists massively in counterfeit even if they like the model. Their choice of brand is, however, not affected, only the choice of model is.

Since all of our respondents have already purchased luxury goods, we found it useful to ask them their motivations for purchasing luxury goods. There are a number of reasons, quite different, we will name:

"To be stylish," "to be different," "to be fashionable," to choose quality, "belong to a group»...

The motivations are consistent with those mentioned in the literature. Indeed, the first work on this subject (e.g. Kapferer, 1998; Winemaker and Johnson, 1999; Dubois, Laurent and Czellar, 2001, 2005) have led to the emergence of three main types of motivations (Vickers and Renand, 2003). They are functional - such as quality research - experiential, such as hedonism, or symbolic, as the affirmation of a social status.

With regard to the barriers of the purchase of counterfeiting, the main result demonstrate 2 main barriers: "poor" quality as described by respondents, and self-image (the risk of being perceived and categorized as a person who buys counterfeits)

Regarding our main point, the object of exploration, which is resistance to counterfeiting. We have tried to study the dimensions of resistance described by some authors, which are: individual Boycott, negative word of mouth and claim. Indeed, according to Roux 2007, Resistance protests...
include boycotts, complaints, negative word of mouth, defections, product hijacking and creative tinkering.

According to Bron 2003, the boycott is the result of several "individual actions dispersed by individuals with both collective and personal interests." As for S.Trautwein, J.Lindenmeier, 2019, they consider three dimensions of consumer resistance: the intention of consumers to boycott, Negative word of mouth and the claim. Our study found that many of our respondents resist counterfeiting, either as a matter of principle or after a first bad experience.

IMAGE 2
Word Cloud « Resistance »
NVIVO

Respondents say that the temptation is enormous but they resist (the word Boycott is often used as seen in the word cloud) for reasons that are important for them : "I'm against," "it's ignorance," "I prefer creative brands" "I don't want to fall into the trap of appearance" ... thus the "Boycott" dimension was confirmed in our respondents.

As for negative word of mouth, opinions are diverse. Therefore some claim to talk about counterfeiting in a negative way with those around them when the subject is discussed, while others prefer to keep their opinion to themselves to not offend their interlocutors.

The "claim" dimension is absent among our respondents. No one has testified that they have used the claim or intend to do so in the future.

. CONCLUSION
Consumer resistance is a phenomenon little covered by existing literature. When it comes to consumer resistance to counterfeiting, this work is the first to our knowledge. Therefore, the choice of an exploratory qualitative study is entirely relevant.

This study considers the notion of consumer resistance to counterfeiting by considering the 3 dimensions cited in the literature: individual boycott, negative word of mouth and claim. We were also able to study the attitude towards counterfeiting, the motivations for buying luxury goods, and the obstacles on the purchase of counterfeits.

We see that resistance to counterfeiting does exist in the Moroccan context. Respondents say that the temptation is great in Morocco since counterfeiting exists and is offered everywhere. However, many of them resisted to it. We could distinguish those who resist by principle and have therefore never bought counterfeits. And those who resist because they have already tried it but the experience turned off disappointing. It is noted that the main obstacles to the purchase of counterfeiting are: poor perceived quality and the social risk of being categorized as a person who buys counterfeiting.

However, almost all respondents have a negative attitude towards counterfeiting

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