

“It is too precious to be wasted!” Counterfeit branded fashion goods for everyday consumption

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Abstract

Due to the plethora of counterfeit goods in the physical and virtual marketplace, the plummeting demand for genuine fashion goods led to social and economic problems in the fashion goods industry. These dark markets pose the most critical challenge for luxury brand manufacturers in discouraging consumers from participating in counterfeiting activities. Based on a hermeneutic phenomenology study, this research attempted to examine an exhaustive and contextualised account of 12 consumers consumption experiences on the purchase of counterfeit branded fashion goods through in-depth interviews. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, and two themes emerged from this study; special occasions and prized collection. It validated that consumer refused to detach from the brand and purchased counterfeit branded fashion goods due to the intense attachment with the desired brand. It enables them to connect to the brand daily, which echoed profane consumption. The data confirmed how consumers treat the original branded fashion goods as sacred objects, even though the value should be preserved, and their involvement in counterfeit consumption was merely to protect those original branded fashion goods. This analysis adds knowledge to counterfeit branded fashion goods and consumer behaviour as the emerging themes depicted the actual experiences captured from the consumers who continuously involved in counterfeit consumption practice.

Keywords: Counterfeit goods, brand love, phenomenology, fashion goods

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of counterfeit market creates asymmetrical effects on the social hierarchy, which can lead to unequal judgments and perceptions of the social classes as consumers discriminate ‘out-group’ members (Amaral & Loken, 2016). This biased judgment, nonetheless, is manipulated by ‘in-group members’ to ‘secretly’ participate in counterfeit consumption, so as to ‘camouflage’ their self-identity before other in-group members (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Pueschel et al., 2016). Equipped with extensive knowledge regarding counterfeit market and goods, consumers can select the best quality of counterfeit luxury fashion goods to showcase their desired self-image and identity (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Bian et al., 2016; Peng et al., 2013; Perez et al., 2010; Pueschel et al., 2016; Thaichon & Quach, 2016). Hence, ‘blending’ the usage of original luxury brand and counterfeit version enables these ‘in-group’ members to protect their self-image and social position from being caught by other social group members.

Despite the adverse effects discussed above, the aspirational effect does influence counterfeit consumers to purchase original luxury brand (Bekir et al., 2013). The existence of counterfeit goods serves as a “gateway” product that enables consumers to minimise financial risks before deciding to purchase original luxury brand (Ahuvia et al., 2013; Key et al., 2013). The literature depicts that counterfeit goods are meant for low- and middle-income groups or social class consumers (Augusto de Matos et al., 2007; Zaichkowsky, 2000). However, the perceived value dimension (Wiedmann & Hennigs, 2017) also attracts high-income and high-social class consumers to indulge in this unethical consumption (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Pueschel et al., 2016). Eisend et al.,

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(2017) asserted that demographic characteristics do not affect consumer's attitudes, intention, or behaviour on counterfeit brand products, thus reflecting that counterfeit market is not meant for those unaffordable only.

Studies on counterfeit goods purchase in Malaysia have revealed value consciousness is one of the key factors that promote consumers' attitudes and purchase intention in counterfeit consumption (Ting et al., 2016). This notion is in line with another study that found perceived values borne by counterfeit goods were more important during economic hardship (Mohd Nordin et al., 2013). Malaysian consumers have been exposed to the attitude of looking for bargains in spending every single cent of their money. In order to satisfy their material needs, consumers tend to imitate the lifestyle of others by purchasing counterfeit goods (Mohd Nordin et al., 2013). The literature depicts that Millennial consumer are heavy users of luxury fashion products that are frequently counterfeited (The Boston Consulting Group-Altgamma, 2017) and aimed by counterfeiters due to their low income (Chakraborty et al., 1996; Cordell et al., 1996; H. Kim & Karpova, 2010; Marcketti & Shelley, 2009; Wilcox et al., 2009; Yoo & Lee, 2012). As consumers become reliant on the visible cues reflected by luxury brand, counterfeit versions are the best option for these young adult consumers who face financial constraints to emulate their desired social status (Teah & Phau, 2009; Hashim et al., 2018) and to keep up with fashion.

In precise, the involvement of consumers in counterfeit consumption is classified into deceptive and non-deceptive counterfeit purchase (Grossman & Shapiro, 1998). Deceptive counterfeit purchase occurs when consumers lack knowledge and information to distinguish counterfeit from original goods (Gino et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2018). On the contrary, non-deceptive counterfeit purchase reflects consumers equipped with sufficient knowledge and the ability to detect cues that indicate the counterfeit nature of the goods (Bian & Veloutsou, 2007; Sharma & Chan, 2011; Zampetakis, 2014). Malaysia is recognised as a shopping heaven for "bargain hunters" who seek affordable branded luxury goods that can be easily accessed from unregulated outlets, registered stores, and online platforms (The Malaysian Reserve, 2020).

To date, fashion goods manufacturers rely on the creation of branding strategies with a message that emphasises on the symbolic values of possessing luxury goods. Unfortunately, this has generated aspirational effects that lead to product substitution (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Bekir et al., 2013), hence the misconception of the meaning by consumers of counterfeit products. Apparently, consumers involved in counterfeit consumption not only seek extrinsic values as reported in past studies (Phau & Teah, 2009; Staake et al., 2009; Ting et al., 2016), but also look for hedonic and intrinsic values, such as self-competency and pleasure (Bian et al., 2016; Key et al., 2013; Pueschel et al., 2016). Therefore, it is integral to inform consumers that the values sought from counterfeit consumption exert adverse implications to the society and the country. This message is more effective to hinder the escalating demand from Malaysian consumers for counterfeit goods and to prevent any adverse effect on the national economy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The substitution effects dilute the values of genuine luxury brands as consumers start losing faith in the "magical" power of the brand that is supposed to enhance their social class and status (Wilcox et al., 2009). As a result, consumers try to disassociate themselves from brands that are counterfeited and avoid purchasing those brands. Hence, luxury brand manufacturers struggle to protect the brand exclusivity and expect their loyal customers to stand together to combat the aggressive counterfeiter (Cesareo & Stöttinger, 2015; Loi et al., 2015). Instead of moving away from the brand, "real" consumers with strong internal needs, without hesitation, would keep displaying their "real" love and loyalty towards the brand (Khandeparkar & Motiani, 2018; Yoo & Lee, 2012) as counterfeit versions turn more inferior (Bian & Moutinho, 2011b; Yoo & Lee, 2012; Zaichkowsky, 2000).

As depicted in the literature, value consciousness has been identified as an influential factor that motivates consumers to purchase counterfeit goods as they are concerned about paying low prices, subject to some quality constraint (Eisend & Schuchert-güler, 2006; Phau et al., 2013; Phau & Teah, 2009; Staake et al., 2009; Teah et al., 2015; Wilcox et al., 2009). Hence, the price has a greater influence on consumer purchase (Batra, 2012; Cui & Liu, 2001), describing consumers as very price-sensitive, as the satisfaction coming from the low price that they paid for the desired branded fashion goods without sacrificing plenty of money. Similarly, Quintanilla et al., (2010) discovered that counterfeit consumers defined themselves as efficient in optimising their resources and that utilising the counterfeit market as a good decision which is "more worthwhile" spending money on an identical copied of branded fashion goods. Thus, the "affordability" issue made consumers realise their money's worth which enable them to own more branded fashion goods collection. Prior studies noted that consumers involved in non-deceptive counterfeit were aware of the inferior quality of counterfeit goods and admitted that the quality was incomparable to the original brand (Amaral & Loken, 2016b; Large, 2014; Nik Hashim et al., 2018; Zaichkowsky, 2000). Instead of being concerned about the inferior functional quality, counterfeit luxury brand

provides these consumers the opportunity to satiate their craving for wearing branded fashion goods at a low price, in which they could not afford to obtain them previously (Phau & Teah, 2009; Priporas et al., 2015; Swami et al., 2009; Teah et al., 2015).

Thaichon and Quach (2016) also reported that the consumers were fully aware of the functional flaws of the counterfeit version, but resolved them with the excellent quality of product appearance (Pope et al., 2020). Thus, the consumers were indeed concerned about the replication quality of the exterior characteristics, which enabled them to reduce their financial and psychosocial risks. As depicted in the literature, the factors that influence consumers attitudes and purchase intention on counterfeit goods are psychosocial risks that expose them to social embarrassment if they are caught by others purchasing or wearing the counterfeit goods (Amaral & Loken, 2016b; Y. Chen et al., 2014; Pueschel et al., 2016). However, extensive consumer involvement in searching for information on counterfeit goods leads to knowledge and skill enhancement, thus enabling them to select the best quality of counterfeit goods (Xuemei Bian et al., 2016; Key et al., 2013; Nik Hashim et al., 2018; Sharma & Chan, 2016b; Thaichon & Quach, 2016), and reducing those psychosocial risks. Indeed, consumers discovered that they received expected value, which is the high similarity of exterior characteristics of counterfeit goods from the money they had spent; signifying that the informants were satisfied with their ability to wear the desired branded fashion goods.

The literature depicts, despite being highly value-conscious and price-sensitive, young consumers display very strong attachment and connection to a brand (Ismail et al., 2020). Additionally, these group of consumers seek quality products and prefer global brands to local ones (Tjiptono et al., 2020), have a strong desire to show off high-class and hedonic lifestyle, as well as prefer affordable prices (Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019; Truong et al., 2010b). Hence, the need to conform to fashion and stay “in-vogue” before others with minimal amount of investment (Gentry et al., 2006) help counterfeit consumers to emulate their desired lifestyle. The counterfeit market enabled the price-sensitive informants to stay connected to a brand at an affordable price that gave good value for money. Unlike purchasing the original branded fashion goods, consumers involved in counterfeit consumption found that the price-quality relationship of counterfeit products is regarded as offering good value for their money, instead of high functional quality and performance of the goods. Prior literature claims that luxury brand consumers tend to buy counterfeit brands to safeguard their popularity and attractiveness since they face scarce financial resources (Fastoso et al., 2018; Priporas et al., 2015). Financial limitation is a form of resource scarcity defined as the real or perceived lack of various forms of capital (i.e., financial, social, cultural) or other production inputs (i.e., time) that the consumer invests in order to acquire and use goods/services (Hamilton et al., 2019).

The literature asserts that consumers’ attitudes and behaviour are strongly influenced by a brand as they are emotionally attached to a brand (Batra et al., 2012; Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019). The existing cognition, belief, as well as evaluation of high price and quality of original branded fashion goods, portray a high brand image that symbolises meaning to consumers (Cho & Fiore, 2015; Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019; Turunen & Leipämaa-leskinen, 2015). Belk et al., (1989) pointed out material object that infuses a special meaning to an individual will be set apart from everyday usage, which is also known as profane consumption (Loro, 2006), thus, signifies how consumers develop a deeper relationship with the object.

The consumers ascribed counterfeit consumption as an opportunity to keep up with the fashion and trend, apart from serving as a tool to protect the value of the original branded fashion goods. Given how the consumers conjured up the meaning of counterfeit consumption as a platform to satiate their cravings on using the desired branded fashion goods, the psychological connection they made with counterfeit consumption had little to do with inferior or low-quality image and quality performance. People may choose to change their attitudes, behaviour or beliefs to reduce dissonance, so as to enable them to “excuse” their contradictory behaviour to compensate their own feelings and resolve any discomfort feeling (Jeong et al., 2019; A. McGrath, 2017). By exploring the meaning of counterfeit consumption through the phenomenology studies, consumers in this study revealed how they resolved the uncomfortable psychological state when purchasing and using counterfeit branded fashion goods.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

Given the exploratory nature of the study, phenomenology is applied to understand the meaning behind consumer involvement in counterfeit consumption behaviour. Phenomenology provides more insights from the actual consumers’ real-life experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and thus able to explain the increasing demand for

counterfeit goods from the consumers' continuous involvement. A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted to allow the informants to talk freely, which "directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences as expressed in their words" and statements that infuse meaning (Seale & Silverman, 1997).

The researchers adopted a purposive and snowballing sampling strategy, and in total, including twelve in-depth interviews with six male and six female participants. The researchers classified them as young adult consumers ranging from 20 to 33 years old. There were pre-selected criteria for choosing and selecting the informants. The informants should at least have a two years' experience purchasing and using counterfeit fashion goods, i.e., actively purchasing, owning, and using counterfeit goods for the past six months. This criterion is imperative in defining consumer involvement (Freedman, 1964) as it describes consumers' concern about, interest in or commitment to a particular position on counterfeit consumption. The informants chosen in this research were consumers who purchased counterfeit branded fashion goods, such as handbags, sunglasses, apparel, watches, purses, scarves, telekung (female Muslims prayer attire), shoes, slippers, and sandals. The researchers identified that these fashion goods categories had been the most frequently counterfeited in the literature. As for female scarves (hijab) and telekung, the researchers recognised brands such as Naelofar, Bawal Exclusive, Duck scarves, and Siti Khadijah as among the famous Muslim brands which have been counterfeited and sold widely in Malaysia (Berita Harian, 2016; Harian Metro, 2018; Malaysia Gazette, 2019; New Straits Times, 2018). The researchers audiotaped each in-depth interview and lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. Demographic data are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic data of informants

Informants	Occupation	Years of consumption experiences
Informant 1, 22 years, Male	University Student	7 years
Informant 2, 28 years, Female	Executive	8 years
Informant 3, 20 years, Male	Sales promoter	3 years
Informant 4, 33 years, Female	Entrepreneur	10 years
Informant 5, 22 years, Female	Administrator	4 years
Informant 6, 33 years, Female	Government Officer	2 years
Informant 7, 22 years, Female	University Student	2 years
Informant 8, 33 years, Male	Government Officer	15 years
Informant 9, 20 years, Male	University Student	5 years
Informant 10, 22 years, Male	University Student	5 years
Informant 11, 22 years, Female	University Student	2 years
Informant 12, 22 years, Male	University Student	5 years

3.2 Data collection, analysis and ethical considerations

The researchers collected data in six months between May 2018 and October 2018 and conducted the interviews at the informants' chosen locations. During the interview session, the researchers familiarised themselves with some terms, which the constructed meaning derived from the cultural values, such as "grade," "premium," "high-grade," and "copy-ori", which denoted counterfeit branded fashion goods. As this study explored the meaning of consumption experiences, the informants could express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with both genuine and counterfeit fashion goods. It helped the researchers gain more insights into understanding the underlying motives of continuous consumer involvement in this counterfeit consumption. Although 12 informants were interviewed, 4 interviews stood out as their consumption experiences in counterfeit goods revealed a new emerging theme testifying their love to the original fashion brands. Their consumption experiences were compelling and their experiences capture divergent points on a continuum of counterfeit goods purchase, thus, can help delineate the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). An in-depth presentation of these four informants' contrary experiences and interpretations contribute to the meaning of counterfeit branded fashion goods consumption at an individual level.

In this research, the researchers performed thematic analysis as it offers a way of recognising and tapping the underlying themes in a given dataset, flexible enough to be modified for the needs of many studies, and non-intricate, besides providing rich and detailed data (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Due to the bilingual nature of Malaysian speakers, no software automatically transcribed the mixture of recorded English and Malay conversations practised by the informants. Thus, the researchers transcribed it manually due to the constraints. Since the study aimed to discover the meaning from the actual consumer experience, the researchers analysed the statements to capture the sense. The researchers recorded all interview sessions and wrote them to generate interpretations via a hermeneutic circle during the data collection process. The step intended to comprehend and interpret the phenomenon based on the consumers' shared knowledge and experience.

To allow for a holistic perspective, the three researchers discussed all emerging themes. The interchange and discussion of interpretations helped the researchers define and redefine the direction of analysis. The researchers examined the categorisation of data and comparisons between the informant's reports to identify the main themes and subthemes.

The researchers briefed all the informants about the purpose of the interview and their position in this investigation. As for 'consent and ethics approval', the researchers obtained a written consent form to proceed with the study from each participant voluntarily. All the informants have been informed their rights and interests were essential when reporting and distributing the data. The researchers kept the name and other personal details of the informants confidential. In an attempt to protect the identity of the participants, the researchers applied pseudonyms. The researchers securely stored all related records and data, and nobody other than the researchers could access them. They archived documents in a secure room, keeping them for three or seven years after completion.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Two main themes emerged related to the consumer's involvement in counterfeit fashion goods; special occasion and prized collection reflected how the consumers protected their original belonging from any potential spoilage as they felt that the original version was sacred and had symbolic values in their lives.

Theme 1: Special Occasion

This theme described how the informants indicated a strong sense of attachment to original branded fashion goods. Therefore, they were motivated to find alternative goods in protecting the value of the branded fashion goods, which was meaningful to them. The informants believed that the counterfeit version served as a protection tool of the original version; thus, sustaining their involvement in counterfeit consumption.

Informant 9 is a male and 20 years of age, a university student that love to purchase and wear Vans shoes, adidas tracksuits and G-shock watch. He revealed his bitter experience when he used his original Vans shoes during a workshop at the university. He described a feeling of frustration as he always tripped on the machines with his original Vans' shoes, which eventually damaged the appearance of his shoes. As he frequently spent his time at the workshop and worked with a machine, he realised that wearing his original Vans' shoes would ruin the condition of his shoes, thus the feeling of regret for he was unable to protect his shoes. As a result, he wore the copied version of Vans's shoes to the university. He kept his original Vans' shoes at home and wore them occasionally for leisure activity. Hence, he bought three pairs of copied Vans' shoes throughout his three-year study period at the university merely to replace his original Vans' shoes when attending classes.

"I bought both the original and first copy shoes. For daily use, such as going to the class and workshop, I preferred wearing the first copy one. Due to safety reason in the workshop, I would wear the first copy version. There was an incident when I accidentally kicked a machine in the workshop. I felt that it was a waste to wear original shoes because I love them. So, I wore three first copy Vans shoes while studying for 3 years at the university. I had three first copy Vans and one original Vans. I keep the original pair at home and wore it for leisure activities. I love my original shoes and I felt that it would be a waste to wear them daily." (Informant 9)

Informant 3 is a male and 20 years of age, a sales promoter that love to purchase and collect brands such as Adidas, Supremes, Places Plus Faces, Vans shoes, bags and apparel. He pointed out a feeling of regretful when he wore original fashion goods for daily usage. The original fashion goods were too valuable for him to be worn for daily

consumption. Hence, he kept his costly goods in the closet and boxes to preserve their value, instead of wearing them to workplace. For him, the decision to purchase and wear both original and counterfeit versions was determined by the types of usage, occasion, and with whom he hanged out together. As for the original version, he preferred wearing them during special occasions, such as wedding, holidays, and hanging out with friends. Meanwhile, the counterfeit version that dismisses much protection and care, was worn for daily usage, such as to work.

“As for me, I bought first copy products because if I wear the original ones for daily usage, such as going to work, it would be wasted. Am I right? I prefer keeping the original ones in the closet and box, besides wearing them while hanging out with friends, shopping, and holiday. I used the first copy goods depending on usage, such as bag, shoes, and shirts for daily usage and for work. If I’m going to a wedding and or any special event, I would wear the original one. If I wear my original shoes to work by bike on daily basis, they will be damaged if it rains. Therefore, it is better to wear the first copy version to work.” (Informant 3)

Informant 7 is a female and 22 years of age, a university student that frequently purchase Naelofar hijab, Guess and Michael Kors handbag and purse. She felt that it was better to wear the copied version of Naelofar hijab (Muslim women scarf) to class daily, although she agreed with others that it was better to purchase the original version as it is more long-lasting. She noted that wearing the original hijab was only worthwhile for special events, such as going out with someone special. She added that something expensive should be worn only for special occasion.

“I do not mind because we are not wearing the original one every day. I wear the original scarf if there is an event or when I go out. If I am going to the class, I would wear the first copy version. If I have to attend a special occasion, such as a special date, I will use the original one. It depends on the situation. If one wants to use the product for long term, it would be better to buy the original version. It is true. As for me, the copied version is sufficient for daily usage. If we wear the original one for a special event, we will be motivated to dress up more attractively. As for the copy goods, they are suitable for daily usage. It is not worthy to wear the original one for everyday usage.” (Informant 7)

Theme 2: Prized Collection

This theme the need to protect the value of his original branded fashion goods and decided to keep them as precious collection. Based on the Cambridge dictionary, prized is defined as something valuable and important. Informant 8 is a male, 33 years of age, a government officer that love to collect Adidas, Fila, Levis, Marvel apparels, wallet, watches and slippers. He believed that his original T-shirt is precious and important to his life, thus decided not to wear it as he felt that it was important to protect such prized item. However, since he had still wanted to wear branded items to keep up with the trends; he purchased the copied version of the desired T-shirt to be worn. The informant felt that he was protecting the value of the original T-shirt. He believed that keeping the original version in good condition was a smart investment for future, and wearing the copied one enabled him to keep up with the latest trends:

“Since I kept a lot of original t-shirts and framed them, my wife was curious about my intention and asked me about it. I also bought the same T-shirt in the first copy version. I told my wife that the one in the frame was original, and the one that I wear was the first copy version. I believe that the price of the original goods will increase in future. I have both the original ones for my personal collection and the first copy ones to wear.” (Informant 8)

Apparently, Informant 8 was willing to spend some extra cash on both versions as he found that the counterfeit market gave him a platform to pursue his hobbies and interest. He believed that by keeping the original version in a “special place” was a smart action to preserve the value of his original T-shirt. Simultaneously, he purchased the counterfeit T-shirt to replace the original one as profane usage. He believed that both versions are important to his life in fulfilling his material needs and desire.

Indeed, both themes portrayed the consumers' concern about taking precautionary steps to protect their original branded fashion goods through counterfeit consumption as they refused to detach from the aspired brand in their daily consumption. Counterfeit consumption enabled them to preserve the value of the original branded fashion goods by performing dual consumption; counterfeit for profane usage and original for sacred usage. The themes

indicate that the consumers had intense feelings towards the branded fashion goods, as they pointed out the original ones deserve to be treated with reverence. The literature asserts that consumers' attitudes and behaviour are strongly influenced by a brand as they are emotionally attached to a brand (Batra et al., 2012; Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019). The existing cognition, belief, as well as evaluation of high price and quality of original branded fashion goods, portray a high brand image that symbolises meaning to consumers (Cho & Fiore, 2015; Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2019; Turunen & Leipämaa-leskinen, 2015), wherein the value of the original brand is preserved since it is too sacred. As a result, consumers distinguished the use of the two versions of branded fashion goods based on occasion and situation, which required them to purchase and wear both original and counterfeit versions. These findings are in line with sacred consumption highlighted by Belk et al., (1989), in which material object that infuses a special meaning to an individual will be set apart from everyday usage, which is also known as profane consumption (Loroz, 2006).

In preserving the hidden meaning behind the object, the consumers carefully used their original branded fashion goods as they delivered special meaning to them. However, the need to be associated with the branded fashion goods in daily lives led to the consumption of counterfeit versions. This is ascribed to the fact that the consumers believed that the brand is congruent with their self-image and represents their personal characteristics or current self-image (Cho, 2015); thus, refusing to detach themselves from the brand for daily consumption. The consumers attributed the consumption of counterfeit goods as a tool to protect the original version; signifying profane consumption as suitable for daily consumption.

The consumers in this study were committed to their favorite brand as they were not willing to be detached from the brand for daily consumption, signifying brand intimacy. Cho and Fiore (2015) noted that consumers treat their favourite brand similar to building long-term friendship, thus having a sense of intimacy with the brand. To keep their relationship with the brand, consumers repurchase their favorite brand in counterfeit version, which is more worthwhile for daily consumption without any worry to preserve the value of the original goods. The literature also highlights brand love, where consumers recognize social and psychological benefits from their long-lasting brand relationship (F. Huber et al., 2010).

By consuming both versions, the consumers were able to protect the "sacredness" of their original branded fashion goods by wearing and using them only during special occasion, besides keeping them as precious collection for the goods were too valuable to be worn for daily usage. These consumers did not mind spending some resources (time, effort, and money) to search the identical copied as a substitute of the original version for their daily usage. Ahuvia et al., (2013) classified counterfeit consumers who purchased both categories of original and counterfeit luxury brands as "omnivorous buyers" who had the urge to create their "desired wardrobe". Although these "omnivorous" consumers can afford to purchase the original luxury brand, they are not satisfied purchasing only the original luxury brand as it enables them to save more cost in owning more collection and design. As for the informants in this study, those who practiced sacred consumption can be classified as "omnivorous" consumers, as their aim is to protect and preserve their original branded fashion goods, thus the need to purchase both versions of the branded fashion goods.

5. CONCLUSION

This study elucidates a significant meaning of counterfeit consumption with the emergent themes of special occasion and prized collection from consumers' lived experiences which could be described as sacred consumption. Sacred consumption has been discussed widely in the context of ritual object associated with traditional religious aspects, such as Christmas consumption (Tynan & McKechnie, 2006), Islamic consumption (Jafari et al., 2011), and responsible consumption (Cherrier, 2009; Kunchambo et al., 2017), which infuse a symbolic meaning. Turning to this present study, the consumers' involvement in counterfeit consumption infused a special meaning that can be regarded as sacred consumption from their lived experiences. As both of the themes (special occasion and prized collection) are absent in the literature, this study significantly contributes to the counterfeit consumption body of knowledge.

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