



**DOES NOVELTY-SEEKING DRIVE PURCHASE DECISIONS?  
UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER DESIRES TO BUY  
COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the effect of product knowledge and product appearance on counterfeit product purchasing decisions through novelty seeking. In the current era, consumers use many counterfeit products as an alternative to the original product. The research using quantitative study by testing 148 samples as users of counterfeit products. The results showed product knowledge and product appearance positively impact on purchasing decisions. In addition, the appearance that imitates the original product tends to be liked because of its innovation. Research also proves that novelty seeking strengthens the effect of product knowledge and product appearance on purchasing decisions. The determinants of counterfeit product purchase, including product knowledge and product appearance, have limited understanding. The research indicates that when consumers have adequate knowledge of the product, they have identical desire to buy counterfeit product as the original product because it has a novelty. Research limitation only focuses on fashion counterfeit product (clothes and shoes), further study should expand in another types of product to gain comprehensive understanding.

**Keywords:** product knowledge; product appearance; counterfeit product; novelty seeking; purchase decision

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the current era, the development of branded products is growing rapidly (Fastoso et al., 2018; Lee & Trim, 2019). Branded products value consumers because the brand's creates an impression of high value (Talaat, 2020). Branded goods give the impression of hedonism to the wearer, which is why many consumers buy them for this value. Hedonistic values are an indicator that determines the success of marketing branded goods (Karjaluo et al., 2016). However, the current trend is that many of these branded goods are counterfeited (Ayad et al., 2021). The counterfeiting of branded products exists because many consumers have hedonic values but lack the purchasing power. Therefore, they opt to buy counterfeit goods. Branded but imitation goods are widely used by consumers with hedonic values but imbalanced purchasing power. The consumer buying process is based on the propensity to showcase this value to others, which creates a desire to buy the product. Consumers are not only looking for the value contained in the product but also need novelty that can represent themselves. Clothing represents the consumer's self as seen by others. The decision to purchase clothes involves various aspects, including the value and novelty that arise when consumers wear these clothes (Kodžoman, 2019).

Product knowledge is a consumer's understanding of the product to be purchased; therefore, consumers make a purchase decision based on the values contained in the product (Yang & Battocchio, 2021). Consumers have a comprehensive understanding of the values contained in a product, and this understanding plays an important role in bringing out value when the product is used. Consumer knowledge represents the knowledge of the product, which enables consumers who use the product to have a comprehensive understanding of it. Product knowledge underlies the decision-making process and influences conformity with the choices made. When consumers make purchasing decisions, they consider various aspects, including a well-recognized and well-known product (Shen et al., 2017). Product knowledge is a cognitive aspect found in consumers who study the brands based on consumer values (Karimi et al., 2015). Product knowledge is an essential aspect for consumers to represent themselves, and it also plays a crucial role in determining a purchasing decision.

Product appearance is an important aspect in improving purchasing decisions. When a product has a new and elegant appearance, such as in the case of buying clothes, consumers will not hesitate to make a decision. Consumer decision-making is often based on the product's appearance, which reflects on the consumer (Karmarkar & Bollinger, 2015). The decision-making process is based on various aspects, including product appearance, which represents elegance. The role of consumers in decision-making is to thoroughly evaluate available choices and make a product selection. This research focuses on counterfeit products, where consumers make purchasing decisions based on well-known brands that are compatible with their budgets.

Previous studies have not fully explore the role of novelty seeking in improving purchasing decisions on counterfeit products (Cesareo & Pastore, 2014; Doherty et al., 2014). This study comprehensively discusses the role of novelty seeking in increasing purchasing decisions on counterfeit products, which are influenced by product knowledge and appearance. Novelty seeking is essential to understand consumer desires to buy counterfeit products that match their purchasing power. (Khare & Kautish, 2022). This study highlights the significant role of novelty in enhancing consumers' purchasing decisions regarding counterfeit products. While previous research has largely focused on genuine products, the impact of novelty seeking on counterfeit products remains relatively unexplored, warranting further investigation. Shafique et al., (2015) suggests that the brand contained in counterfeit products is a major attraction for buyers, rather than the quality of the product itself. This indicates that what drives consumers to buy is the appearance and brand of the counterfeit product. Verma et al., (2018) indicates that genuine products have novelty that attracts consumers to buy counterfeit products. When consumers buy products with novelty, it can psychologically satisfy their desire for fashion, but further research is needed to confirm and identify clearer determinants. Haseeb & Mukhtar (2016) shows that status is an important aspect for consumers who want to buy counterfeit products, and that status is associated with the product's appearance characteristics, but further research is needed on the composition of product appearance aspects. Abdullah & Yu (2019) reinforces the previous research gap that one important aspect for consumers when buying counterfeit products is their desire to have a branded product in the fashion, but at an affordable price.

Previous studies have not directly linked novelty seeking, but factors determining the purchase of counterfeit products are related to unethical beliefs, social status, and religiosity (Elsantil & Bedair, 2022). Essentially, the desire to buy counterfeit products is to show a luxurious and trendy appearance caused by lifestyle. Molina-Castillo et al., (2021) uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to analyze the purchase of counterfeit products. However, purchasing counterfeit products is often associated with consumer psychological aspects, such as narcissism (Fastoso et al., 2018), discrepancy between social status and implicit self-esteem (Stoner & Wang, 2014), covert and overt (Kang & Park, 2016). Psychological aspects are related to novelty seeking, which indicates that consumers buy counterfeit products because they can provide an up-to-date appearance. Consumer psychological aspects are related to social identity theory, so this research complements the view that the purchase of counterfeit products is not only related to the TPB theory, but social identity theory complements the phenomenon of purchasing counterfeit products. As counterfeit products represent a form of intellectual property theft, it is important to understand the behavior of consumers who use them. This research is novel in its thorough analysis of the psychology of counterfeit product users.

Product knowledge is an essential aspect of making purchasing decisions. In certain types of products, consumers will make purchasing decisions if they understand the characteristics of the product and the value contained in it. In hedonic goods, consumers will tend to make purchases if the value of the goods is high and they perceive a value obtained when using the product. Consumers with hedonic characteristics will tend to use products that can be exhibited to others (Millan et al., 2013). This study elaborates on individuals with hedonic characteristics but low purchasing power. These consumers will be satisfied with counterfeit products. In clothing products, various types of counterfeit products are available in the marketplace that consumers can easily purchase. Product knowledge is essential; therefore, consumers will tend to buy counterfeit products compared to original products (Hanzaee & Ghafelehbashi, 2012). Because counterfeit products have the value that can

be exhibited but at a lower price, consumer knowledge will be the basis for making purchasing decisions on certain products. Consumers are faced with choices when buying a product at a price that tends to be cheaper in the counterfeit product marketplace. In the original product, consumers will get a high value but at a high price. Therefore, consumers will try to purchase counterfeit products with different qualities. Consumer purchases based on knowledge are only made when the product has a well-known brand. Consumers will tend to make purchasing decisions on products that have well-known brands, and they may opt for imitation goods due to a lack of purchasing power to satisfy consumer desires using well-known products (Umam & Saripah, 2018).

Counterfeit products are a choice for consumers considering the reasons that have been stated. The consumer's decision to buy imitation goods is to satisfy the desire to use branded products because of their limited purchasing power. Consumers with knowledge will make purchasing decisions based on various aspects that support efforts to satisfy hedonic values. Product knowledge is a consumer's understanding of the attributes, terminology, and features available in the product. In addition, products known to consumers have a certain value, encouraging purchasing decisions even though the goods purchased are imitations (Karimi et al., 2015). A significant reason why consumers choose to purchase imitation goods is their high level of product knowledge. If the product knowledge is low, consumers may opt for other goods instead of imitation products. The decision to purchase imitation goods is often motivated by a strong understanding of the product's attributes and features, coupled with limited purchasing power. Therefore, product knowledge plays a crucial role in determining consumer purchasing decisions. This study confirms that a comprehensive understanding of a product's various attributes and characteristics can increase the likelihood of consumers choosing to purchase imitation goods.

Product appearance is an essential aspect of consumer decisions to make a purchase. A counterfeit product is a product that imitates the original product to encourage consumers to make a purchase decision. The counterfeit product represents a fake brand because it does not reflect the results of the original company. Products sold in imitation goods imitate the original product, so the design and appearance shown by imitation goods tend to imitate. Because consumers have low purchasing power, the purchasing decision process is based on purchasing ability, and product appearance, consumers who have low purchasing power, tend to make purchases of imitation goods (Khoa, 2020). Consumers with hedonic values will like products that give an elegant impression but at a lower price. The elegant impression is an imitation of the original product. Various brands that provide clothing products that have well-known brands will tend to have high prices. When consumers are faced with high prices with the availability of imitation goods, consumers will tend to make purchasing decisions (Bian et al., 2015). The lower price is a strong reason besides the product's appearance. Consumers like product appearances that support various aspects and daily activities, so the decision process for buying imitation goods is getting stronger with the product appearance that imitates the original product. This study explores the important role of appearance in clothes with varying demands at any time. Clothing that tends to change periodically encourages original products to make innovations that can provide newness to a product (Kusuma, 2021). In counterfeit products that tend to imitate the original product, the counterfeit product will match the original product. This indicates that the imitation program will look similar to the original product but at a lower price.

Consumers with self-congruity will tend to make purchasing decisions according to themselves (Wijaya, 2017). Consumers need a representation to produce an appearance based on the product according to the consumer self. Decision-making based on imitation purchases focuses on product appearance. A lower selling price is one aspect that attracts consumers to encourage purchasing decisions by considering product appearance. Product appearance is fashion that gives an elegant impression and tends to be liked by consumers so that with this appearance, consumers can look attractive (Wagner et al., 2019). The decision-making process is based on product appearances that can give an impression to others and represent the consumer's self. Decision-making is based on various aspects, the main one of which is product appearance, which reflects the judgment of others for consumers. This study confirms that product appearance influences purchasing decisions for fashion products.

Consumers who understand the product will make purchasing decisions based on their knowledge. Knowledge of the product is essential because, for this reason, the consumer will make a purchase decision. Knowledge of the product includes product attributes and quality. In addition, the wheel has a value that contains hedonic aspects so that consumers will feel satisfied with the products purchased. For consumers with low purchasing power, the hedonic aspect can be fulfilled when consumers buy counterfeit products (Yaakop et al., 2021). The essential aspect of product knowledge is the determinant of purchasing decisions for counterfeit products. Consumers who have difficulty buying the original product can have an alternative when a counterfeit product is available at a lower price. The brand is one of the essential aspects when consumers make purchasing decisions, especially on counterfeit products. Counterfeit products that contain product attributes such as symbols or logos can be used as a sign that increases the hedonic values of consumers who use them. The symbol can

be used to communicate that consumers have a high value. A counterfeit product is a product that presents a hedonic value but imitates an inappropriate quality. This means that in the counterfeit product, there is an aspect of the imitation of the original product so that consumers who use it will feel they have hedonic values even though the product used is fake. Counterfeit products are shown to strengthen the consumer's image in society and the environment (Ayad et al., 2021).

Purchasing clothes is one of the essential aspects when consumers make purchasing decisions. For example, when consumers use clothes from famous or identical brands at high prices but the goods are imitations, other people will think that the product is genuinely based on the symbol or logo printed on the shirt. These values are what consumers want to share with the surrounding environment, so consumers are interested in making purchasing decisions on counterfeit products. In addition, this study confirms that there is novelty seeking found in consumers; a self-concept arises when consumers want to find new products (Yildirim et al., 2021). The self-concept illustrates that the consumer is an individual who likes novelty, thus giving rise to novelty seeking. The novelty is in the original products because the product regularly strives to create a novelty that can create value for its buyers. The new product that appears will be immediately imitated by the provider or seller of imitation goods so that the available designs and colors will be easily resold at lower prices. Imitation sellers take refuge from well-known brands and colors that make consumers feel that the wearer is elegant, so they are interested in buying counterfeit products. Novelty seeking is essential when consumers want new products and special designs. Therefore, this study expects novelty seeking strengthens the effect of product knowledge on the decision to purchase costumes.

Product appearance is essential to determine purchasing decisions, especially when there is a novelty in the appearance. The product appearance arises from innovations made by original clothing providers. Impersonators or sellers of imitation goods immediately imitate the product design but cannot imitate the quality. Buyers will tend to make a purchase decision because the price offered is cheaper when compared to the original product (Kasuma et al., 2020). This consumer behavior shows a desire to consume or look good by using original products at lower prices. The decision-making will be stronger with the search for updates; consumers want an elegant and attractive appearance in their environment. When consumers use counterfeit products, symbols or logos are printed on the clothes, creating a desire to be seen in their environment. The search for updates strengthens the decision-making process; consumers want to be seen as individuals with novelties in the fashion field. Consumers tend to be individuals who like novelty because the decision-making process involves novelty seeking (Hanzaee & Ghafelehbash, 2012). This study confirms that there is an important role for novelty seeking in decision-making. This study suspects that novelty seeking strengthens the effect of product appearance on counterfeit product purchasing decisions

The research framework, which outlines the relationships between product knowledge, product appearance, novelty seeking, and counterfeit product purchasing decisions, is depicted in Figure 1.

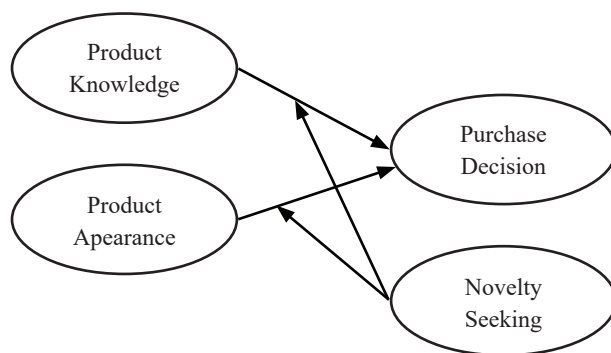


Figure 1. Research Framework

## METHOD

The research approach is employ quantitative study to examine the data through statistical tools to produce conclusions (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2014). The research population for this study consists of users of counterfeit products, specifically shoes and clothes, with a research sample of 148 respondents. Counterfeit products are illegal items made to look like genuine products. The respondents are chosen based on their status as users of counterfeit products. The study's variables are product knowledge and product appearance, which are moderated by novelty seeking on counterfeit product purchasing decisions. Product knowledge refers to a consumer's understanding and familiarity with a particular product or brand, the indicators adopted from Visnjic



et al., (2016). Product appearance refers to the physical attributes and characteristics of a product that can be observed through sight, touch, or other sensory modalities. This includes features such as color, shape, size, texture, and design elements, as well as packaging and branding. Product appearance indicator is adopted from Hu et al., (2022). Novelty seeking is a personality trait that refers to the tendency to actively search for new and exciting experiences and sensations. It involves a desire for novelty, complexity, and variety in different aspects of life, such as fashion, entertainment, and social interactions. Novelty seeking indicators is using Zeba & Ganguli, (2019) indicator. Counterfeit product purchasing refers to the act of buying and acquiring goods that are illegally produced and/or sold under a brand name without the authorization of the trademark owner which the indicators adopt from Usmani & Ejaz (2020). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical method used to analyze the relationships between multiple variables. It can be used to test complex theories and hypotheses by analyzing the inter-relationships between multiple dependent and independent variables (Wang & Rhemtulla, 2021). SMART PLS uses a two-stage approach for SEM analysis (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019), the first stage involves assessing the measurement model, which involves testing the reliability and validity of the measurement items used to measure the latent constructs. The second stage involves testing the structural model, which involves examining the relationships between the latent constructs. SMART PLS is powerful software to examine marketing research (Hair et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

### RESULTS

The study tested the validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing as follows.

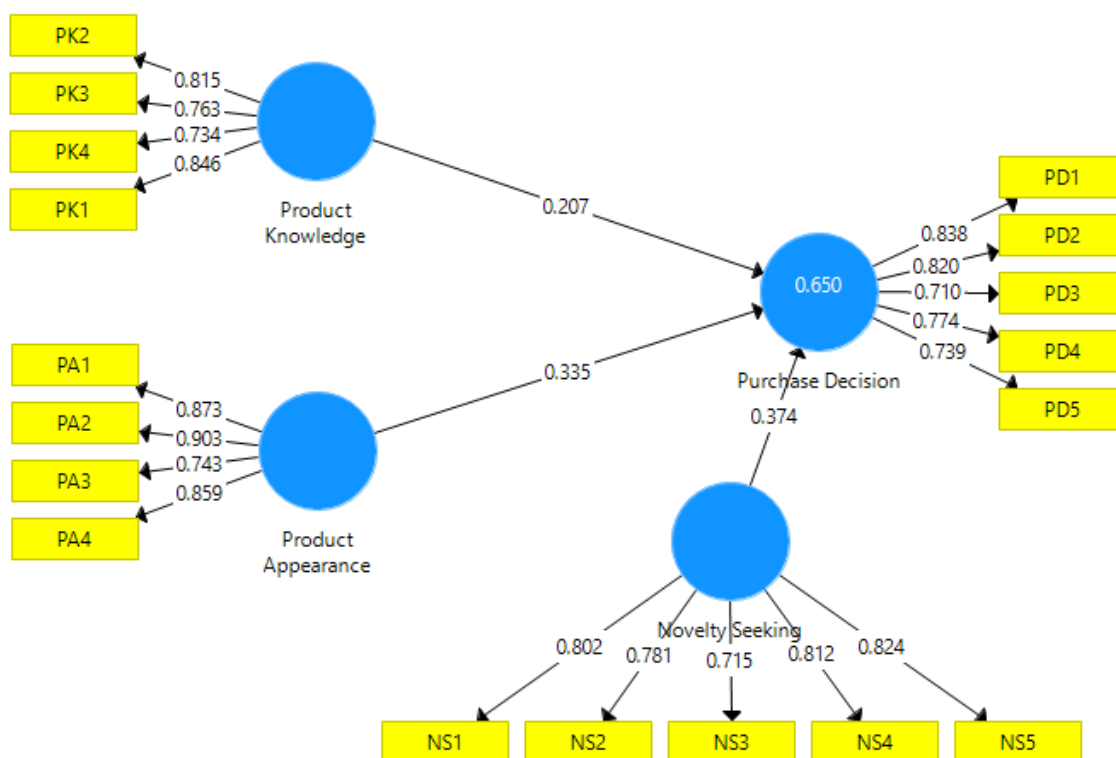


Figure 2. Loading Factor Result

The loading factor test results, as shown in Figure 1, indicate that all research indicators have a value of  $\geq 0.7$ . A loading factor of  $\geq 0.7$  is considered to indicate that the indicator variable is valid

Table 1. Validity and Reliability test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVC)
Novelty Seeking	0.846	0.891	0.620
Product Appearance	0.867	0.910	0.717
Product Knowledge	0.800	0.869	0.625
Purchase Decesion	0.836	0.884	0.605

Validity and reliability tests were conducted and the results are shown in Table 1. All variables had an AVE value of  $\geq 0.5$ , and Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were  $\geq 0.7$ , indicating that the indicators and variables used in the study are valid and reliable. Discriminant validity was also tested and the results are shown in Table 2, further strengthening the validity of the data analyzed.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variable	Novelty Seeking	Product Appearance	Product Knowledge	Purchase Decision
Novelty Seeking	0,787			
Product Appearance	0,679	0,847		
Product Knowledge	0,704	0,549	0,791	
Purchase Decision	0,747	0,703	0,654	0,778

Table 3. Hypothesis testing result

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Product Knowledge → Purchase Decision	0.207	0.205	0.087	2.385	0.017
Product Appearance → Purchase Decision	0.335	0.337	0.066	5.046	0.000
Moderating Effect 1	0.331	0.342	0.034	3.186	0.002
Moderating Effect 2	0.374	0.376	0.100	3.742	0.000

Research has proven that product knowledge has an effect on purchase decision ( $\alpha = 2.385$ , sig 0.017  $\leq 0.050$ ), hypothesis 1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 is supported by showing that there is an effect of product appearance on purchase decision ( $\alpha = 5.046$ , sig 0.000  $\leq 0.050$ ). Research proves that moderating effect 1 (novelty seeking strengthens the influence of product knowledge on purchase decision) is supported ( $\alpha = 3.186$ , sig 0.002  $\leq 0.050$ ). Moderating effect 2 (novelty seeking strengthens the influence of product knowledge on purchase decision) is also supported by decision ( $\alpha = 3.742$ , sig 0.000  $\leq 0.050$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research, Hypothesis One is supported, indicating that there is an effect of product knowledge on purchasing decisions for counterfeit products. This study shows that when consumers recognize that the product has hedonic values, they will purchase the product even though it is counterfeit. Consumers do not focus on the originality or quality of the product, but rather on the symbol or logo displayed by the counterfeit product. This study confirms that consumers tend to focus only on aspects that demonstrate hedonic values when making a purchase (Mayasari et al., 2022). Consumers make purchases to demonstrate to their social environment that they can afford the original product, even if the purchased product is an imitation. This study emphasizes the important role of consumer knowledge as an essential aspect for consumers to purchase imitation products. Consumers have a comprehensive understanding that the product they are purchasing is an imitation product (Upadhye et al., 2021). However, consumers are attracted to imitation products because of the symbols they contain. The symbol is a product attribute that signals that the product can be exhibited to others, giving consumers a positive impression of the product. Clothing is a product that can be shown to other people, so by wearing certain clothes, consumers can receive acknowledgment. This study confirms that hedonistic characteristics are one of the factors that determine the purchase of imitation goods, particularly in the fashion industry. These values are reflected in the desire to show others the novelty of the imitated product. Consumer decision-making processes are influenced by hedonic values, and quality aspects are not the primary consideration when making purchasing decisions. Consumer knowledge relates not only to product attributes but also to various other aspects, such as novelty related to motifs and colors. In original products, innovations are continually implemented to produce new products with symbols indicating their high value. When these products are imitated, consumers become interested in making purchasing decisions based on the novelty-seeking aspect of the product. Clothing and shoes are commonly imitated items, allowing consumers to base their purchasing decisions on the symbols contained in these products. (Niinimäki, 2010). Interest in product attributes is a dominant factor that motivates consumers to make purchase decisions. Consumers want to demonstrate to others that their ability and purchasing power to buy branded goods is a reality. The decision-making process based solely on symbolic desires is a factor that encourages consumers to buy counterfeit products.

The study's results indicate that product appearance is a crucial aspect in determining consumer decisions. The second research hypothesis is connected to a significant positive result. This study confirms that product appearance plays an important role in encouraging and stimulating consumers to buy counterfeit products. The appearance comes from the innovations produced by the original manufacturer. With a counterfeit product, a product is imitated so that an imitation novelty creates a desire to buy for consumers. The crucial role of appearance is to support consumers' desire to have a product at a low price, but with new and innovative product attributes. Product selection is essential, and consumers tend to prefer products with novelty, thus creating a desire to buy counterfeit products due to limited purchasing power. Product appearance is considered a critical aspect because consumers who behave hedonically tend to want to showcase the novelty of their appearance to their surroundings (Kusuma, 2021). Consumers consider a product's appearance as a determinant to buy, so the important role of product appearance is a stimulant in purchasing decisions. This study confirms that product appearance is an essential aspect, hence consumers want to elaborate on the attributes contained in the product, especially the colors and logos used as symbols to show the environment. This research proves that product appearance is an important determinant of purchasing decisions on counterfeit products. The ability of a product to provide an important appearance for consumers is an essential aspect of the decision process. Consumers make purchasing decisions solely related to the attributes of the product in question, especially since counterfeit products with certain brands will give an impression or value that can be shown to the environment. A counterfeit product is an imitation that aims to provide consumer groups with weak purchasing power to make purchasing decisions on products that are similar to the original. This study found that an artificial product that appears as a result of imitation has an important role in determining purchasing decisions. Consumers will see that there are certain symbols or certain colors attached to the product that will trigger a purchase decision (Liao & Hsieh, 2013). For example, products related to fashion, such as shoes and clothes, can increase purchasing decisions because they are associated with certain symbols. Some brands have imitation goods, making counterfeit products a stimulus for purchasing decisions. This study found that an attractive product appearance can create a luxurious or elegant impression, and by using this product, consumers can enhance hedonic values. (Tseng et al., 2021).

Product knowledge is a crucial factor in determining purchasing decisions, as confirmed by the positive and significant effect found in this study. Furthermore, the study found that the aspect of novelty seeking reinforces the effect of product knowledge on purchasing decisions. Consumers who are aware that the product they are purchasing is an imitation tend to make a purchase decision based on the relatively lower price, rather than the quality aspect. The desire for novelty and innovation is a driving force for consumers to choose a counterfeit product at a lower price. Consumers with hedonic characteristics also tend to prefer counterfeit products because, despite the lower price, there is still an imitation of the original product's innovation and novelty. Moreover, this study found that original products are easily imitated, including the design and logo of the product. Counterfeit products often have the same color and shape as the original product, with the primary difference being the quality of the goods. Consumers with limited purchasing power tend to choose counterfeit products over the original due to the lower price. (Tseng et al., 2021). This research indicates that the original products are still vulnerable to imitation due to weak internal and external factors. Consumers are attracted to the novelty aspect of products, and imitation products use this aspect to create novelty through shape and color. For instance, counterfeit clothing and shoes have logos attached to them, giving the impression that the products are original. However, the quality of the original product is superior to that of the imitation. The study also confirms that hedonistic characteristics play a significant role in encouraging novelty-seeking behavior, and consumers tend to prefer counterfeit products based on their product knowledge.

Research has also shown that counterfeit products often imitate the color and appearance of the original product to appeal to consumers. Consumers with limited purchasing power may base their purchasing decisions on the value associated with the product. This value is often hedonic, meaning it is related to the consumer's desire for pleasure or enjoyment. Consumers may desire to buy the original product, but settle for a counterfeit product with imitation quality due to financial constraints. While these imitation products may have an attractive appearance, they are often of much lower quality than the original. Appearance is an essential aspect for consumers, as they often want to display their products in their surrounding environment, especially those with hedonic characteristics. (Doherty et al., 2014). The desire to have something new and show it to the environment is a crucial factor for consumers with hedonic characteristics. This study confirms that novelty seeking plays a significant role in the relationship between product knowledge and purchasing decisions. Consumers who are aware that the product is an imitation but still feel a sense of novelty will likely make a purchase decision. Novelty seeking is particularly important for consumers who seek to create an elegant impression. In the case of original products, consumers always seek originality at an affordable price. However, this study also found that consumers are interested in counterfeit products that imitate the original products.

## CONCLUSION

The study aims to analyze the effect of product knowledge and product appearance on purchasing decisions of counterfeit products through novelty seeking. The results showed that product knowledge and product appearance had a positive effect on purchasing decisions. The study also tested the effect of novelty seeking as a mediator. The results indicate that novelty seeking strengthened the effect of product knowledge and appearance on counterfeit product purchasing decisions. This study elaborates on the purchase of counterfeit clothes and shoes that are currently circulating in the market. The results of this study indicate that there is still a consumer desire to buy counterfeit products because of the novelty of the colors and attributes and the high hedonic character, creating a desire to buy counterfeit products at lower prices. The study also proves that the social identity theory can be used to analyze counterfeit product purchasing, in addition to the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The research views consumer identity needs through novelty that immerse in original products, but since they have a high price, counterfeit products with similar appearances become an alternative. The study's limitation is that it only focuses on consumers who use counterfeit clothes and shoes since they are commonly plagiarized. A better understanding is needed to analyze another type of product, such as digital piracy, which complements consumer behavior and psychology mechanisms towards counterfeit products.

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