



Identifying Apparel Attributes: The Relationship between Risks, Perceived Copyright Infringement and Purchase Intention of Knockoff Fashion Apparel Products

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Introduction: The success of fast fashion retailers has some industry leaders calling for copyright protection for apparel and closely aligned fashion products (Cline, 2012). Establishing criteria to determine what constitutes apparel copyright infringement is extremely difficult, as few designs are completely original (Raustiala & Sprigman, 2006). Apparel attributes are pertinent to purchase intention of fashion apparel and could influence perceived copyright infringement of knockoff fashion apparel products. The primary purpose of this study was to identify prominent visual fashion apparel attributes that could determine perceived copyright infringement. A secondary purpose was to examine the relationships among fashion apparel attributes, perceived copyright infringement, perceived risk, and purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel. Researchers have identified apparel attribute factors including: Quality (Wee, Tan, & Cheok, 1995), appearance (Abraham-Murali & Littrell, 1995; Zhang, Li, Gong, and Wu, 2002), aesthetics (Abraham-Murali & Littrell, 1995) and functionality (Zhang, et al., 2002).

Rationale for Study: The Innovative Design Protection and Piracy Prevention Act (IDPPPA) would extend copyright protection to apparel and could be headed to the U.S. Senate (Scafidi, 2012). Copyright infringement court cases use the Gorham test, which employs ordinary observers. The validity of using ordinary observers in the Gorham test is acceptable, as it has been used in courtrooms for over one hundred years (Carani, 2009). Should an apparel copyright bill be enacted, an objective set of attributes is needed to identify copyright infringement (Design Piracy Prohibition Act, 2007).

Methodology: This exploratory study included a pilot study and a panel of industry and academic experts to validate visual stimuli used in the study. Existing scales measured the importance of fashion apparel attributes, perceptions of copyright infringement, perceived risk, and intention to purchase knockoff fashion apparel. Paper instruments in conjunction with a Microsoft Office PowerPoint® of visual stimuli were administered in resident merchandising classes. The convenience sample (n = 175) included primarily females (90%), mostly 18-24 years (89%), and the majority (75%) reported work experience within the fashion industry.

Data Analysis: Factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to identify underlying dimensions of product attributes, perceived risk and purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel. Cronbach's alphas were calculated for the scale items to ensure they exhibited satisfactory levels of internal consistency. Apparel attribute factors (i.e., quality, appearance, aesthetics, functionality) explained 58.27% of the total variance. Three

dimensions (i.e., performance, social, asset) of the 7-item perceived risk scale explained 67.34% of the total variance, and intention to purchase knockoff fashion apparel was uni-dimensional.

Results: Multiple regression analysis tested the hypothesized relationships. H1: Attributes will affect perceived infringement of knockoff fashion apparel. Only Quality ($\beta = .165, p = .033$) significantly affected perceived copyright infringement. H2: Attributes will affect purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel. The multiple regression model explained the effect of fashion apparel attributes on purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel ($R^2 = .118; F(4, 162) = 5.43; p < .000$). Quality ($\beta = -.305, p < .000$) significantly affected purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel. H3: Risk dimensions will affect purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel products. The multiple regression model with all three predictors significantly explained perceived risk associated with purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel ($R^2 = .493; F(3, 168) = 54.52; p = .000$). Performance risk ($\beta = -.211, p = .000$) and Asset Risk ($\beta = -.179, p < .001$) negatively affected Purchase Intention of knockoff fashion apparel, and Social risk ($\beta = .646, p = .000$) positively affected Purchase Intention of knockoff fashion apparel. H4: Perceived copyright infringement will negatively affect purchase intention of knockoff fashion apparel products was not supported.

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