Antecedents of Counterfeit Drugs Purchase Intention from elderly person laborers of Thailand's Consumer: Role of Materialism, Ethics, and Variety Seeking and Brand Love

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ABSTRACT

In the past few years, it is indicated that counterfeit products can cause financial losses owners as well as distributors of counterfeit products and also affect the consumer purchase intention. Although, the given research paper investigates customer purchase intention of counterfeit drugs mainly through the role of materialism. The present study also explores the mediating role of ethics, variety seeking, and brand love in the relationship between materialism and counterfeit drug purchase intention. For this intention, about 520 elderly person laborer customers of counterfeit drugs were surveyed to gather information for the research. The study uses KMO, descriptive statistics and SEM to compute and check the authenticity of the hypothesis. The measurements of SEM results indicate and reflect an insignificant relationship between ethics and materialism which directly influence the counterfeit drug purchase intention of consumers. Further results of the study also indicate that the impact of brand love and variety-seeking was significant in the relationship between materialism and CDPI. The results of the given study contribute positively to the developing research on the topic of counterfeit products and purchase intention of customers. The results of the research also help the sector of making counterfeit products like drugs in Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, there are many cases regarding counterfeit drugs purchasing which is an illegal act and cause some harmful situation for the majority of the customers. In the pharmaceutical sector, the percentage of this illegal and unethical activity is continuously increasing that made a negative impact on the life of patients. In this technological environment, the percentage of such incidents is continuously increasing (Pandey & Srivastava, 2016). According to the studies, such counterfeit medication results in a higher disease rate in the country's economy that may badly impact the future of that state. In all over the world, there is a materialistic approach made by the majority of the businessmen to earn a large amount of profit by misguiding the consumers from the real picture (Kamranfard, 2018).

In Thailand, there are many issues regarding these counterfeit incidents that occurred in the last ten decades. Such occurrence made a major impact on the economic growth and welfare of this state (Kuanpoth, 2018). That's the reason, it is quite difficult to prevent its natives from unusual diseases and symptoms like coronavirus, in the current situation. According to the research survey, there is fluctuation in the number of incidents regarding this illegal act of pharmacists and their companies. Its graphical data is given below

Figure 1. Total number of counterfeit incidents in Thailand pharmaceutical sector from 2010 to 2018
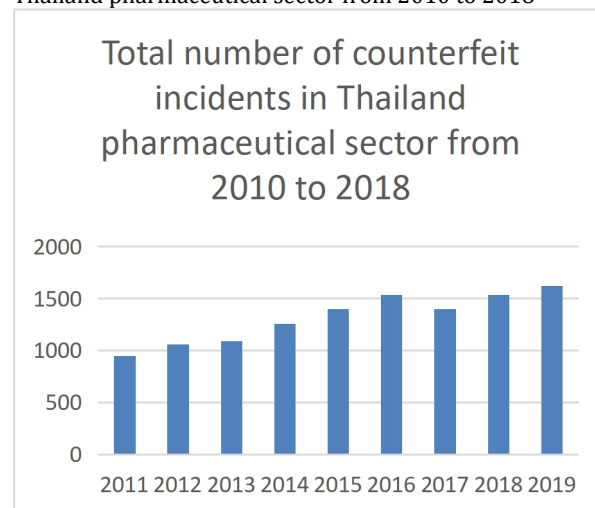
The above figure shows that in the last few years, its government take action against such counterfeit incidents in the pharmaceutical industry. Like in the year 2016, the percentage of such illegal incidents was much higher, which was efficiently controlled by the state. But, in the last year, due to the existence of fake companies in the local and national level, the number of this incident became increased to its maximum point (Eisend, 2019).

To secure the health of the infected persons, there is a need to create some awareness to stop such fake purchases. Like in this technological era, there is a need to take some prevention measures by the consumers in the market, so that its occurrence related threats can be overcome(Quoquab, Pahlevan, Mohammad, & Thurasamy, 2017). Some of the important ways to find out the

occurrence of such fake drugs and its related importance are shown in the following table;

Table 1: Ways to find out the occurrence of fake drugs incidents in a society

Ways to find out the occurrence of fake drugs incidents in a society	
No improvement in health at the completion of dosage	35%
Alteration on the drug/ package	23%
Adverse reaction	29%
Expiry Date	19%
Absence of NAFDAC number	10%
Wrong PIN on the mobile authentication service	7%
Resulting death of individual	3%

The above table shows that if a customer considered that there is no improvement in his health, then he can easily find out the existence of fake drugs in the market (Davidson, Nepomuceno, & Laroche, 2019). These are important ways to evaluate the importance of such factors in the investigation procedure.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Materialism and counterfeit drugs purchase intention
In 2019, a research was conducted by Laxmi and Sunpreet regarding evaluating the impact of the materialism approach of the businessman and the percentage of the counterfeit drugs incidents in society. According to the researches, it is quite an informative approach to investigate the negative side of the company's profit-earning goal in the customer market (Singh & Sahni, 2019). According to the scholars, it becomes quite common to overlook the business norms and values in this pharmaceutical industry, where the majority of the professionals are only interested to earn a large amount of profit from their operating activities. According to the scholars, they mostly motivated their customers to use that fake drugs and asked other people to use their health drugs (Quoquab, Pahlevan, & Hussin, 2016).

According to scholars, the concept of materialism is directly proportional to the enhancement of the purchase intention in the pharmaceutical industry (Yeboah, Owusu-Prempeh, & Adjei, 2017). In many developed states, such cases of fake human drugs have occurred that creates a threatening situation in front of the international bodies to save the lives of a common man and secure the future of the industries (Majid, 2017; Ubajaka et al., 2016). Many countries made some legal action regarding this illegal activity in a business field (Jung, Lee, & Workman, 2019). Hence, these studies proposed the following hypothesis;

H1: Materialism has a significant impact on the Counterfeit Drugs Purchase Intention
Mediating role of ethics between materialism and counterfeit drugs purchase intention
Business ethics is the only factor that can overcome the impact of materialism on the purchasing intention kid the counterfeit drugs (Xia & Chengb, 2017). According to Saeed & Paracha, the concept of materialism plays a negative impact on the business norms and values, which set by international authorized bodies. They stated that being a businessman, it is his responsibility to critically inspect and evaluate the social, individual and other related business norms in his operating activities (Saeed & Paracha, 2019).

According to the business scholars, if the enforcement of business ethics is majorly occurred in the operating, financing and investing activities of a company, then the occurrence of such unethical incidents can be resolved and overcame (Quoquab et al., 2017). In 2020, Harun, Mahmud, Othman, Ali, & Ismael majorly worked on this crucial factor in the current market perspective and concluded that such ethics plays an important role minimize the purchase intention of the counterfeit drugs in the supplier market. They stated that it is simply a social norm and belief system of an individual regarding this factor (Harun, Mahmud, Othman, Ali, & Ismael, 2020). At the end of the critical analysis of the above articles, the following hypothesis will be generated;

H2: Ethics plays a negative mediating role between Materialism and Counterfeit Drugs Purchase Intention
Mediating role of variety seeking between materialism and counterfeit drugs purchase intention
To critically evaluate the mediating role of variety seeking in the materialism based counterfeit drugs purchasing intention of a company, many researches are conducted by scholars. In 2017, the researchers stated that an attractive advertisement trap a large number of customers at the same time (Xia & Chengb, 2017). They stated that they mostly used the people's perception level regarding varieties in products and misguide them. In an international pharmaceutical, there are many counterfeit drugs and its existence factor that directly impact the welfare of any state like in the United State, there are many health-related issues that are developed due to this unequal distribution of the power (Kalyoncuoglu & Sahin, 2017; Kamranfard, 2018).

According to Nagar & Singh, its occurrence is majorly based on the industrialized culture in the operating activities of a state, that giving a free-hand to such an organization to misguide the customers by providing variety regarding health drugs in the market (Nagar & Singh, 2019). The researchers concluded that now majority of the pharmaceutical and other related companies show a vast variety of their health-related drugs and misused the people's perceptions for their own goals and profits (Abdullah & Yu, 2019; Hennigs, Klarmann, & Labenz, 2016). So, the proposed hypothesis of this study is given below;

H3: Variety Seeking between Materialism and Counterfeit Drugs Purchase Intention
Mediating role of brand love between materialism and counterfeit drugs purchase intention
According to the scholar, a brand love factor is mostly misused by the large multinational companies, by providing a low-quality product to the customers (Gültekin, 2018). He stated that there are many cases, where the manufacturing procedure behind the operational departments of the large scale organizations is unhygienic and out of the international business standards. In 2017, the majority of the researchers stated that such illegal activities within a well-known organization can easily be covered by its management, by imposing their positive brand image in the purchase intentional level of the retailers and customers (Huang, 2017; Hussain, Kofinas, & Win, 2017). According to Morra, Gelosa, Ceruti, & Mazzucchelli, everybody supports one another by misguiding the end-users in the business world.

They stated that there is a chain of materialism between suppliers to manufacturers, retailers and then customers (Morra, Gelosa, Ceruti, & Mazzucchelli, 2018). According

to the scholars, such a brand love factor mostly helps the management to distract the customers from the reality of the product quality; and this occurrence badly impacts the health of an individual (Ghasolia, 2018). At the end of providing a proper justification of their analysis, Souiden, Ladhari, & Zarrouk Amri, concluded that the positive image of any brand provides them an ample opportunity to misguide the end-users and trap them by using attractive marketing procedure, in order to enhance the purchasing intention of the counterfeit drugs (Souiden, Ladhari, & Zarrouk Amri, 2018). So, a following is proposed from the above-mentioned studies

H4: Brand Love between Materialism and Counterfeit Drugs Purchase Intention

Theoretical framework
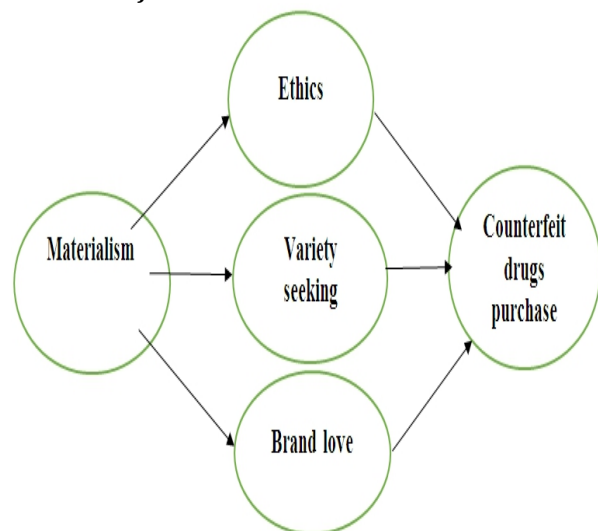
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Data source
This survey-based research was conducted in Thailand's pharmaceutical sector, reason behind selecting Thailand is that counterfeiting of drugs is an emerging problem for Thai pharmaceutical firms. Data for this study was obtained from customers, by using purposive sampling technique 520 elderly person laborers customers were included in final sample and for collection of data, structured self-administrative questionnaires were used to draw information from the respondents. Information regarding purchase intention of counterfeit drugs was collected from a total of 413 respondents from different areas in Yasothorn Thailand. Most of the respondents were approached in health-care centers and clinics and filled the questionnaires while waiting. 490 questionnaires were filled by the respondents, retained 413 questionaries' for analysis after eliminating 77 responses due to missing data. In this survey, 228(55.2 %) were male respondents and 185 (44.8%) were females. 31.0% had less than 25 years' age, 42.1 % aged between 25 years to 35 years, 23% of respondents have age 35 years to 45 years and 3.9% aged more than 45 years.

Measures
Different scales and measures are applied in this study that are consistent to previous literature and supported by many studies. The questionnaire was developed by reviewing each scale an item to avoid errors in content. For recording responses 5 Point-Likert scale ranging 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

Materialism

The materialism construct was measured by adopting Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism scale. The scale included an 8-item measure of materialism. Sample item is "I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes and the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions" respondents rated the level of materialism on five Point-Likert scale with composite reliability $\alpha = 0.950$.

Ethics
Items for measuring ethics of customer were derived from Tan (2002) scale. Three items were used to evaluate the extent to which customers' ethics effect decision buying decision. For example, '' is it ethically wrong to buy counterfeit drugs?" and "it will have bad impact on society". Responses were recorded on 5-point response scale, results showing $\alpha = 0.904$.

Variety-Seeking Behaviors
For evaluating Variety-Seeking Behaviors a five-item scale of variety-seeking behavior was embraced from Donthu and Gilliland (1996) previous work. One of the five items for measuring variety-seeking behavior was 'I like a great deal of variety' on five scale with $\alpha = 0.952$ composite reliability for this construct.

Intention to Purchase counterfeit drugs
De Matos (2007) scale for purchase intention was selected to gauge this construct. Three items measured the customer's intention to buy counterfeit drugs instead of genuine drugs. Sample item is "I usually like to buy counterfeit drugs". Responses showed $\alpha = 0.901$ as composite reliability.

Brand love
Seven items were adapted to measure brand love from (Bagozzi, Batra, & Ahuvia, 2017) work on brand love. Sample question of this scale is '' I buy this brand drugs because I love this brand". Customers rated their love for brand on 5 Point scale ranging from 1= very weak and 5=very strong. Results yielded $\alpha = 0.975$.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
Data for this study was obtained from customers, by using purposive sampling technique 413 customers were included in final sample and for collection of data to investigate customer purchasing intention of counterfeit drugs. In this survey, 228(55.2 %) were male respondents and 185 (44.8%) were females. 31.0% had less than 25 years' age, 42.1 % aged between 25 years to 35 years, 23% of respondents have age 35 years to 45 years and 3.9% aged more than 45 years. 44.4% of respondents had working experience 2 years to 5 years. Structured self-administrative questionnaires were used to draw information from the respondents. This information was then statistically analyzed with different statistical tools.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
ComDrugPI	413	1.00	5.00	3.2635	1.03305	-.238	.120
Materialism	413	1.00	5.00	3.4085	.99950	-.408	.120
BrandLove	413	1.00	5.00	3.5375	1.16838	-.564	.120
VarSeeking	413	1.00	5.28	3.4740	1.11303	-.554	.120
Ethics	413	1.00	5.00	3.5682	1.13864	-.562	.120
Valid N (listwise)	413						

Table 1 is comprised of the descriptive statistics for sample to précis the sample features. Total observations are 413 (N). No outliers detected in test except variety seeking behavior that maximum value surpasses threshold maximum value of 5. Other constructs minimum and maximum values are under 1 and 5. The mean statistics of variables ranges from 3.2635 to 3.5682 inclining towards 4 depict high consequence. The normality of the data has been proven by skewness testing, as all the results lie in between the threshold range of -1 to +1.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.939
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	12407.537
	df	325
	Sig.	.000

Table 2 presents the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for suitability of sampling size relevant to research. This test came up with .939 as measure of adequacy that is between threshold values of 0.8 to 1 sample adequacy. In Bartlett's Test of Sphericity The approximate of Chi-square is 12407.537 and 325 degree of freedom.

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
DP1				.798	
DP2				.869	
DP3				.830	
MA1	.773				
MA2	.692				
MA3	.763				
MA4	.837				
MA5	.811				
MA6	.857				
MA7	.865				
MA8	.841				
BL1		.850			
BL2		.833			
BL3		.821			
BL4		.873			
BL5		.896			
BL6		.884			
BL7		.882			
VS1			.826		
VS2			.843		
VS3			.831		
VS4			.851		
VS5			.855		
ET1					.805
ET2					.815
ET3					.834

Table no.3 displays the factor loading of constructs in the rooted component matrix, which is a part of Confirmatory Factor Analysis. This is an instrument for checking data accuracy and validity. Results show that all the components carry factor loading greater than 0.7 as materialism from MA8 (0.841) to MA1 (.773) lies in range of 0.7 to 0.8 sloped towards 1 therefore, Needless to say that results specified no issue of cross loading and data is highly valid.

Table 4: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

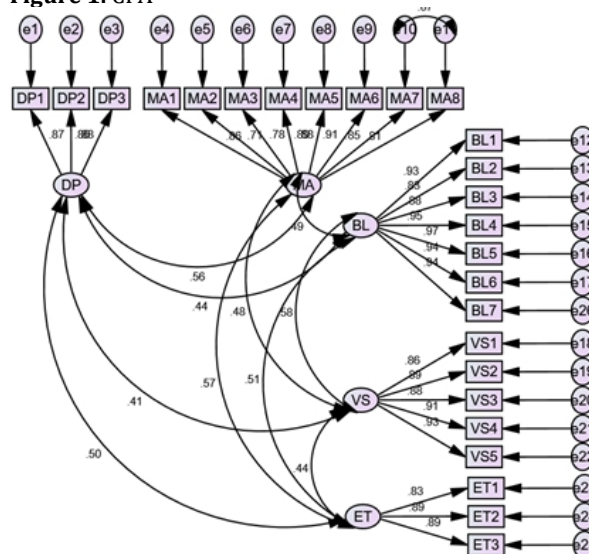|	CR	AVE	MSV	DP	VS	ET	BL	MA
DP	0.901	0.753	0.315	**0.868**				
VS	0.952	0.800	0.341	0.410	**0.894**			
ET	0.904	0.758	0.326	0.500	0.444	**0.871**		
BL	0.975	0.846	0.341	0.444	0.584	0.505	**0.920**	
MA	0.950	0.706	0.326	0.561	0.482	0.571	0.494	**0.840**

Convergent and discriminant validity test results are integrated in Table 4. Convergent validity is estimated by finding CR and AVE that have low threshold values of 0.7 and 0.5 respectively (Hassan, Hameed, Basheer, & Ali, 2020; Iqbal & Hameed, 2020). Confirmed by the results none of the constructs CR and AVE violated the threshold values, ensuring convergent validity. Results given in the diagonal portion of table show that each variable is more associated with itself as each of the values are larger than the values preceded by them, confirming that discriminant validity exists in the data.

Table 5: Confirmatory Factors Analysis

Indicators	Threshold range	Current values
CMIN/DF	Less or equal 3	2.633
GFI	Equal or greater .80	.870
CFI	Equal or greater .90	.962
IFI	Equal or greater .90	.962
RMSEA	Less or equal .08	.063

Table no. 5 shows results for confirmatory factor analysis that is conducted to show fitness of model. Fitness of the model is confirmed by the results since all the values are within the threshold mentioned in the table.

Figure 1. CFA

Table 6: Structural Equation Modeling

Total Effect	Materialism	BrandLove	VarSeeking	Ethics
BrandLove	.483***	.000	.000	.000
VarSeeking	.432***	.000	.000	.000
Ethics	.535***	.000	.000	.000
ComDrugPI	.579***	.157**	.127**	.130
Direct Effect	Materialism	BrandLove	VarSeeking	Ethics**
BrandLove	.483***	.000	.000	.000
VarSeeking	.432***	.000	.000	.000
Ethics	.535***	.000	.000	.000
ComDrugPI	.379***	.157**	.127**	.130**
Indirect Effect	Materialism	BrandLove	VarSeeking	Ethics
BrandLove	.000	.000	.000	.000
VarSeeking	.000	.000	.000	.000
Ethics	.000	.000	.000	.000
ComDrugPI	.200**	.000	.000	.000

The last table that is 6 bring up the findings of structural equation modeling to empirically prove the hypothesis. It can be concluded that materialism has direct and significant relationship with counterfeit drugs purchase intention if we change one-unit in materialism it leads to an increase of 37.9% in counterfeit drugs purchase intention, outcomes also depict significant direct effect on other constructs and subsequently all hypothesis are accepted. Moreover, brand love and variety seeking behavior signposts significant relationship with dependent that will be enhanced Indirect effect through moderators and mediators is also significant and positive as change in these variables will positively change counterfeit drug purchasing intention by 20. % which as a result accept these hypotheses.

Figure 2. SEM
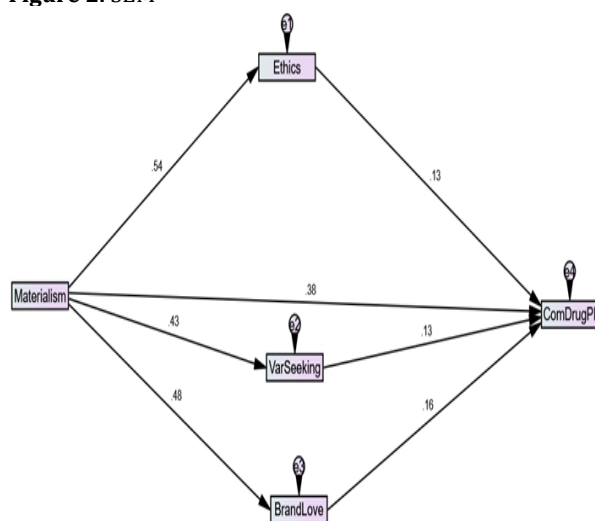
DISCUSSION

According to research by Eisend and Tarrahi (2019), counterfeiting is a process of illegal re-generation and production of original brands mainly by copying the trademarked or same packaging to come out with some identical brands. During the last few years, the concept of counterfeiting is continuously developing especially in the drug production sector of Thailand. The results of the research indicate that the impact of materialism is significant on the counterfeit drug purchase intention (CDPI) of elderly person laborer customers in Thailand; this is because materialistic individuals believe that purchasing products like drugs are important for achieving some goals of life (Singh & Sahni, 2019).

Therefore, the first hypothesis of this research study has been accepted. The results of the study also state that the impact of ethics on the relationship between materialism and counterfeit drug purchase intention is not significant because according to a study by Imran, Jalees, Jiang, and Alam (2018) the ethical terms and aspects did not allow an individual to purchase counterfeit drug products; hence the second hypothesis of the study has been rejected. The results also demonstrate that the impact of brand love and variety-seeking on the relationship between materialism and CDPI.

CONCLUSION

The given research study mainly aims to investigate the impact of materialism on the counterfeit drug purchase intention of the consumers. The following research paper also identifies the mediating impact of ethics, brand love and variety-seeking on the relationship between materialism and CDPI. For the intention of calculating data the given study used some methods and tests including structural equation modeling, confirmatory analysis, and descriptive statistics.

Implications and limitations

To the best of this research, the study helps the future analyst to understand the concept of materialism and customer ethics or variety-seeking behavior. The verdicts of the study also provide an effective platform to drug brand manager Thailand pharmaceutical sector and this study very helpful for public policymakers of Thailand. The study will also apply to the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand and also help them to understand the concept of materialism and its impacts on the counterfeit drug purchase intention of elderly person laborer consumers of Thailand.

Despite their significant implications, the study has some limitations including the results of the study is limited to the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand. Another limitation of the study is that only one brand and product category was selected in this research. Therefore, it is proposed to later studies that they should select other product categories as well to draw more effective results. Furthermore, the mediating variables like brand love, loyalty and attachment aspects in the view of CDPI need to be evaluated in the future.

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