

# Trending copy culture of Bangladesh: Brand product perspective

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to reveal the copy culture of Bangladesh.

**Research methodology:** Qualitative research was designed for this study, and an ethnographic approach was used for data collection along with in-depth interviews with copy brand users. The judgmental and snowball sampling methods were used in this study. Semi-structured questionnaires and mostly open-ended questions were designed based on the objectives of this study.

**Results:** The findings were analyzed under three main themes: Copying Us or copying them, Consumer Subjectivity as individuals, and Fragmented Authenticity.

**Limitations:** Due to financial and time constraints, this research focused only on the capital city of Dhaka. In the case of broader research, this study can be analyzed in other regions of the country, which will provide a wide range of information regarding copy-culture attitudes.

**Contribution:** In Bangladesh, people follow foreign trends and famous people's lifestyles through copy brands. This study defines how and why copying culture encourages people to purchase from the local market. The reason that allures customers to buy replicate products is the availability and affordable price of the product, which is at a time creatively designed likely to match the original version.

**Novelty:** This study can help others to take decisions based on the findings on copy culture.

**Keywords:** *Counterfeit, Brand, Consumption, Lifestyle, Luxury*

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## 1. Introduction

This study defines copy culture as an imitation that may be produced by how the formula of an authentic one is used. Consumers find the same product with substantial price differences, allowing them to use the imitated version. Consumers also find the product near the hand, which is entirely impossible for the authentic version (Purwanto, Margiati, Kuswandi, & Prasetyo, 2019). Compared to the cost, consumers benefit from the right to use fashion that they cannot afford. This research stream will reveal how copying can be creative and how co-creation can happen under counterfeit consumption, which is hardly seen. For example, counterfeit users try to make the copy version look like an authentic product.

They purchase a counterfeit version from the provider and furnish the product according to the shape of their body (Tseng, Chiu, & Leng, 2021). For this co-creation, they are ready to spend extra time and money to help them look like authentic users. Although the mood of consumption differs from Consumer to Consumer, creativity is a favorite (Sparby, Edelhäuser, & Weger, 2019).

This study examines concerns within the framework of copy culture, in which customers are motivated to replicate creatively. While counterfeiting is a widely known issue, we will try to define it under certain themes rather than its traditional meaning. More specifically, we focus on the product-consumer relationship and easy access to counterfeit products, including reasons such as availability and lower cost, the customer, supplier relationship, and co-creation with the supplier's help. We suggest that creative copycat products are eventually a distinct copy culture and generate substantial interest in both consumers and suppliers. We will also attempt to base our research on Bangladesh's current behavioural norms around creative consumption patterns, particularly the copy culture (Fahim, Al Mamun, Hossain, Chakma, & Hassan, 2022).

Will you become angry if you find a person next to you using the same copy version of the product you use?

Will you be astonished that the shirt cost 200 Taka, opposite Dhaka College, which you purchased from Infinity? Will you become angry about seeing the 5000 BDT iPhone from the stadium market in Gulistan? Will you buy a particular brand with a cheap version for the masses? Is it illegal to copy luxury brands without permission? Will you purchase a Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt for 150 BDT from the footpath of Firmgate? As a researcher, I am interested in the above questions and nuances of an emerging copy culture in Bangladesh.

They are crazy with many brands in the market that let them run for the copycat version, which mitigates most of the expectations that an authentic one does (Harun, Mahmud, Othman, Ali, & Ismael, 2020). Complicating the matter is that copy culture is getting faster by the grace of technology. Now, it is possible to produce fashion products that are very similar to authentic ones. The possession of a new copy version of any fashion product is not a matter of guilt for creative consumers in the 21st century (Junejo, Sohu, Ali, Qureshi, & Shaikh, 2020). Indeed, we are passing through an age that enables consumers to choose from the current trends on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Peer pressure, creative groups, and adventurous friends help provoke matters to users and non-users (Wu & Zhao, 2021). Copycats drive consumer demand for new goods in the fashion industry by making previously unique things seem to date. The study aims to Reveal and interpret the crucial concealed reason behind the copy culture (Faruqi, Hoque, & Hride, 2017).

This research will help authentic product marketers decide on the creative appearance of their respective product versions. They understand the hidden motive in the consumer's mind, which instigates copying in the form of co-creation (Fabian & Ibrahim, 2022). The implication of the new version of an authentic product is to capture this type of user through this research.

### ***1.2 Objectives of the Study***

To explore how this copy occurs in Bangladesh. This study explores the range of copies in Bangladesh.

### ***1.3 Research Question***

The research question:

1. Does a consumer enjoy using a copy brand?
2. Where was the copy level reached in Bangladesh?
3. What do Bangladeshi people think about copy culture?

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Data Collection Tool***

Recently, counterfeiting and copy culture has become a global phenomenon. From the beginning of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, counterfeits were a popular alternative to authentic luxury brands for people who

could not afford them (Chand & Fei, 2021). Currently, counterfeit business is 5%-7% of all trade worldwide (Farhat & Chaabouni, 2021). In counterfeiting, consumers are creating demand from the local businessman. Modern marketing and the gap in mitigating demand have provoked intense counterfeiting, which is widely used by tricky businesses.

Further, product demand is enormous in emerging economies, such as Bangladesh (Bian, Haque, & Smith, 2015). As prior research has documented, consumers all over the world love luxury, but a preference for the counterfeit, and counterfeit symbolizes the envy of the luxury user (Woźniak, 2018). Owning and consuming counterfeits can often be regarded as a sign of creativity. Undoubtedly, consumers have a weakness in the brand, but often try to use the non-deceptive counterfeit as the original product (Hutabarat, 2022). Thus, the context of copy culture in Bangladesh allows us to examine whether the joy of co-creation under counterfeit conditions is associated with copy culture in the emerging economy of Bangladesh (Oranefo & Egbunike, 2023).

Previous research has argued about the harmful effects of counterfeiting and voice against counterfeiting (Fink, Maskus, & Qian, 2016), but no one has provided any logical explanation. Why are people rushing towards counterfeit after all of these arguments? No one focuses on the hidden motives of counterfeiters. Where is the intention to come? What drives them toward coping? What is unique about this? We will focus on why it is happening and in what conditions. A logical explanation is provided for each argument about copy culture (Memushi, 2016). There is a vast amount of research on copy culture in Bangladesh.

## **2.2 How copy is taking place in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is an emerging market that is already full of copies and will lead to a copy culture in every market sector (Bian & Haque, 2020). Copy culture prevails in the fashion industry but is also available in art, entertainment, cosmetics, daily necessary products, electronics goods, drinks, medicine, currency, and so on. (Pathak, Velasco, & Calvert, 2019).

The shocking but real story is that Ahsanullah Moni, a wealthy filmmaker from Bangladesh, built a replica of the Taj Mahal. The original took 11 years to create, while this copy required five years because it is not the same size as the original but a scaled duplicate. Taj Mahal Bangladesh is a knockoff ten miles east of Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital (Yang, 2015). The actual Taj Mahal is said to cost USD 827 million to construct, although this copy is somewhat less expensive. As he said, Moni's objective was to make a replica of the Taj Mahal as close to the original, so that underprivileged people in his nation might finally visit India's famed masterpiece (Rahman & Rahman, 2020).

Cosmetics are being produced through illegal local industries, which are spreading all over the country (Varela, Lopes, & Mendes, 2021). Producers use the same bottle version containing elements that seem identical to the original. Ponds powder, Sunsilk shampoo, Dove soap, head and shoulder, Himalaya face wash, Vatika, and Kumarika oil were identical to the branded version. All perfume brand copy versions are produced in these illegal industries.

Daily necessary products such as eggs, cabbage, rice, honey, milk, and even salt are being copied. The eggs and rice were produced using plastic. Cabbage is made from honey, milk, and salt made from various harmful chemicals.

Jinjira-version electronics is famous, although many industries in Gulistan also produce copied electronics. The most alarming news is that unethical businesses also produce copied medicines. They use flour, sugar, and salt to produce medicines similar to the original (Seneviratne & Colombage, 2023). Currency, flowers, and even butters are being copied, showing the tremendous copy culture that prevails in Bangladesh. The new technology and profit-making pave the way for cruel businessmen who produce vast amounts of products consumed by customers daily (Roy, 2023).

Based on a study by Guin et al. (2014), llobalization has accelerated the supply of counterfeit items. 'Glocal' strategies produce super logos across East and Southeast Asia. This study proposes a new

theoretical term, 'logocentrism' (fake dissemination), to expound on the socioeconomic and cultural phenomena of counterfeiting from a global perspective. This demonstrates that we believe that fakes are always one level behind legitimate or approved versions. However, they may be released into the marketplace for sale before the genuine versions (Tunçel, 2022). Supergrade fakes are currently marketed at relatively high prices in the non-deceptive counterfeit market or at practically exact pricing as authorized ones in the misleading counterfeiting market. However, in the past, we assumed that the fakes were incredibly cheap and poorly produced.

According to Basu, Basu, and Lee (2015), most counterfeiters say it is lawful since buyers are fully informed when buying. They provide products that are as excellent as authentic, but cannot compete with premium brands. They conducted interviews with proprietors of luxury items and showed that the shift toward casual wearing drove individuals to look for new methods to distinguish themselves and express their personalities (Tseng et al., 2021). They were highly concerned about how they seemed to others. Individuals relate to their reference groups by employing status products as symbols. Therefore, Buying luxury products is an extreme way to portray one's ideals (MANOLICĂ Mothers).

Romani, Gistri, and Pace (2012) tried to break the conventional thinking that counterfeits can also increase the value of luxury goods, which is well known. When luxury knockoffs are readily accessible, people are more willing to pay a higher price for the authentic brand name because of the prevalence of fakes. Demand for products and prices has increased, particularly among those who wish to set themselves apart from those who can only buy cheap products (Khalid, Wel, Mokhtaruddin, & Alam, 2018). While customers use a counterfeit version of a product to replicate the experience of purchasing a luxury good, this might give rise to a sensation of wanting to purchase the real thing (WTP), because they experience a higher level of satisfaction when using the counterfeit version. This study follows scenario-based experiments that manipulate information regarding the availability of knockdown brands in the market. Future studies may include a scenario defined by identical counterfeit substitutes for the original products and assess the impact on customers' WTP for the originals.

The presence of Rolex Watches confirms the recommended method of impression generation and brand evaluation. It presents a four-step approach to forming impressions and evaluating brands. The first element includes Veblen's conspicuous consumption theory and impression formation theory (Campbell & Campbell, 2021), and describes how an encounter results in the construction of an overall image of the individual and the inference of traits such as wealth or social position. The second part teaches how to identify false statements. This study demonstrates the detection of social status misrepresentations by including the detection of brand and product authenticity. The third element integrates Bourdieu's concept of social space (Roose, Van Eijck, & Lievens, 2012) and discusses how individuals from various social classes vary. Fourth, they could see the customers of the stolen brands as people who respect their social standing and wealth, and as a result, see their social selves as validated. This might help them boost their self-esteem and result in an overall favorable brand rating. The purpose of this research is to show that piracy of products does not always have a negative impact.

Vuitton bags' affluent customers are about showing precious things that are comparatively less available. The writer has given examples of Vuitton and Lexus cars, which seem more attractive to customers than Toyota cars. This is why rich people are ready to spend a huge amount of money to show their financial success and what they can afford. The extra money that customers are willing to pay is deemed a bonus. The author of this research is an independent writer who frames articles and offers fair opinions. They tried to outline some methods that businesses used to get clients to shell out the astronomical fees of the luxury end of the market. Understanding the risk of catering to a niche market, instead of a larger mass market, is crucial for luxury product producers.

Chen, Long, Niu, Feng, and Yang (2014) research propose a new way of theorizing parts of consumer behaviour related to person-object connections by focusing on the materiality concern with consumer-commodity relations. The relationships between individuals and objects of consumption are examined, as are the psychological effects, practice assemblages, social structural forces, and solid cultural consequences that result. This study establishes the foundation for future sociological studies that often

investigate consumer behavior results. They attempted to show the person-object interaction that connects them. This research also considered youth studies, showing that bonding with objects from early childhood continues in later life. Knowledge and practice tend to increase demand for that object. This research will help me in my copy culture of the material-customer relationship.

**The Impact of Counterfeit Products on High-end Brands: An Empirical Consumers Viewpoint Investigation:** The twenty-first-century crime is counterfeiting. Counterfeits severely impact the luxury goods market with well-known brands. Consumers who desire to display their social status and belonging by being adored, acknowledged, and accepted by others, purchase these products. This thesis aims to advance information on how counterfeit items impact consumers' perceptions of luxury brands. A questionnaire was circulated via Facebook and Linnaeus University's internal e-mail system as part of the deductive quantitative research method. Generation Y Swedes created a sample pool. The study and conclusions were based on the responses of 432 individuals who were asked to complete the questionnaire. The public's perception of luxury brands is affected by the prevalence of counterfeit goods. Fake luxury goods affect buyers' mental image of such companies and the value they represent. However, the finding of this research cannot address the question of what are the implications of this unfavourable association.

Dent (2012) investigated how contemporary neoliberal trends have made "piracy," a loaded word for creating and exchanging commodities without authorization, a key component of Brazil's consumer economy. This study examines the "anxious subjectivities" produced in two different piracy-related contexts: an NGO that fights against it and a black market where it is practised. Piracy is seen in several ways, such as a source of national shame, danger to "creative drive" and "equity," and both. By highlighting the "intellectual property" concept's flawed ideological foundations and practical implications for vulnerable market sellers in Campinas, Dent guides the reader into a critical re-examination of the idea.

Gervais (2017) provided a summary of intellectual property law in the United Kingdom and the United States from the 16th century to the present, as well as the notion of fair use and trademark law, noting how the law responds to and makes possible the traffic in images characteristic of late-20th c. society. American legal cases involving contemporary artists and their appropriation of mass media and related images in their artworks conclude that legal conflict arises when appropriated mass media objects and images are also valuable commodities (Egbunike & Oranefo, 2023).

Hernandez-Fernandez and Lewis (2019) seek to bridge the gap between existing work on consumer brand identities and the growing need for consumer authenticity. How can brand authenticity be defined and told? To what degree do businesses and customers interact with each other? What are the ramifications of the branding? The chapter is case-based and demonstrates the branding strategy of L'Occitane en Provence, a firm that manufactures toiletries with strong Mediterranean heritage. Through multifaceted ethnographic research, data were gathered in Paris and Manosque, Haute Provence. In-depth and brief interviews with L'Occitane consumers and management were supplemented by comprehensive observations and secondary data. Interpretative research principles evaluated the entire dataset. However, we argue that businesses are better able to engage in productive discussions with their target audiences and protect their competitive edge if they use a narrative approach to branding. In reality, rivals cannot readily copy a brand's story, because doing so would result in a story that the market does not trust. This chapter contributes to the domain of branding and authenticity by applying the concept and knowledge of consumer authenticity to companies.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Research is a systematic way to discover something new in order to investigate a specific object. Research involves studying something more precisely and determining its facts. Researchers follow a scientific method from start to finish collecting information. Thus, research is a specific way of gathering information. Research is conducted to find new things for the willingness of the researcher—two ways of conducting research: quantitative and qualitative. The selection of one depends on the data types required for the research.

This research mainly focused on the drivers of respondents' interpersonal and personal motivations for counterfeit products. This study's experimental component analyzes the factors that lead customers to buy counterfeit products. This study used a qualitative research technique. Qualitative research is helpful in observing consumers' minds and identifying authentic information regarding this problem. Qualitative research is an unstructured semi-structured research technique. Standard methods of this research include focus groups (group discussion), in-depth interviews, participation, and observation.

Qualitative research descriptively analyzes the data. It produces a descriptive data analysis of - “the respondent's statements and behaviour, both in writing and in conversation” (Nassaji, 2015). When researchers know little about a subject or phenomenon, they need an exploratory study to understand what requires qualitative studies (Astalin, 2013). When the researcher needs to read the responded subconscious mind, belief, behavior, and attitude, it is impossible to go in a structured manner. Qualitative research helps to find insights into the problem and to read the consumer’s mind.

Two types of data were collected for this study. First, we collected data from those who had used luxury and counterfeit brands. Twenty informants were selected based on snowball sampling in Dhaka City. The main challenge in our study was the selection of respondents. Because most people were unwilling to express themselves as counterfeit users, they were selected through snowball sampling, and sometimes they were also selected from Facebook groups. The main target was to select them based on their experience with fake luxury brands. There are some Facebook groups, such as Sparrow and Fimel Fiesta. In that group, the girls shared their preferences, personal photos, and experiences. Some status was updated on these pages to gain insight into counterfeit and luxury brands. Subsequently, according to the response in the comment box, some respondents were selected from these groups. As the research is qualitative, in-depth interviews were taken (Alvindra, Hutagalung, & Sutiyoso, 2023). Two observations were made. The interviews lasted for 50–60 minutes. Unknown respondents preferred to reduce bias. Sometimes, the photo ethnographic method was used. Second, we collected data from students and job-holder drivers. Five informants were selected to collect the information. They were then randomly selected. The main challenge faced by us in data collection was to get the appointment of the informant.

We began to collect data using this in-depth interview method with a questionnaire, but had a respondent-oriented discussion where probing questions were used to obtain thick data. The office, coffee shop, and restaurant were the places where interviews were conducted. The interview was recorded and a photo was taken while maintaining research ethics. The Respondent Consent form was provided before the interviews. Facial expressions and the way questions were answered were noted during the interviews.

In the interviews, we focused on their motives and desires for counterfeit luxury brands—the extent of their involvement with a specific product. On average, the interviews took approximately one hour. Interview data were used to determine how the counterfeit was drawn. We performed a hermeneutic iterative analysis of the interview data to determine how the copy occurred in Bangladesh. In the initial round of data analysis, we analyzed individual interview transcripts to establish each informant's consumer motives and connection to copying and branding. The focus in the second stage was on cross-case analysis among interviewees using a grounded theory technique to discover new patterns related to the idea under development because we were interested in the notion, and identifying copycat outcomes as they appeared in our data was a crucial step in the research. We also used photographs of consumers of several counterfeit brands to undertake the ethnographic analysis. With this new information, we can see how widespread and growing the copy culture is among users. Our results show how the interview and existing data are contrasted with the viewpoints of copy users. Finally, we identified three results of copy culture, which we examined side-by-side.

The respondent’s demographic profile will help obtain an overall view, as shown below:

### **3.1 Respondent’s Demographic Characteristics**

Table 1. The respondent’s demographic profile

SL	Name	Gender	Age	Family/ Income Monthly (BDT)	Education	Occupation	Location
1	Md. Abdullah Alamin	Male	20-25	10-15,000	MBA (studying) at the University of Dhaka	Student	Mirpur 2, Dhaka
2	Rashed Khan	male	20-25	10-15 lac(F)	EMBA (studying) at the University of Dhaka.	Job holder	Eskaton, Dhaka
3	Ayesha Siddika Moni	Female	20-25	2- 2.5 lac(F)	Graduate	Student	Rampura, Dhaka
4	Md: Sayeful Islam	Male	25-30	40-50000	MBA (govt. Titumir college)	Service holder	Pakrail, Dhaka.
5	Moriom akter	Female	20-25	18000	graduate	Student	Panthapath, Dhaka
6	Asiful Islam	Male	20-25	5-10 lac(F)	O-level	Student	Banasree, Rampura
7	Moynul Islam	male	25-30	10-15000	Class 8	Driver	Kafrul, Dhaka.
8	Umma Ayesha	Female	20-25	10,000-15,000	EMBA at the University of Dhaka.	Student	Mohammadpur Dhaka
9	Anjuman Ara	female	20-25	8-10lac(F)	Postgraduate Dhaka.	Student	Mailbag, Dhaka
10	Mizanur Rahman	Male	20-25	20-30000	MBA, University of Dhaka	Student	Tejgaon, Dhaka.
11	Zarin Tasnim	Female	20-25	3 to 5 lac (F)	Graduate	Student	West Rajabazar
12	Arafat	Male	20-25	10-12000	undergraduate	Student	Mogbazar, Dhaka.
13	MorshedA Islam	Female	20-25	1-2 lack (F)	Graduate North-south university	Student	Basundhara, Dhaka
14	Abir Rahman	Male	20-25	5-10 lac (F)	Postgraduate	Businessman	Dhaka.
15	Mehedi Hasan	Male	20-25	5-10 lac (F)	O level	Entrepreneur	Niketan, Gulshan 1, Dhaka
16	Roksana Parvin	female	25-30	70-80 thousand (F)	undergraduate	Student	Mirpur 10, Dhaka.
17	Mithun Islam	Male	25-30	5-10 lac (F)	graduate	Student	Gulshan2, Dhaka
18	Sharmin Sultana	female	20-25	1-2 lack (F)	North south university	Student	Uttara, Dhaka.
19	Noor Alam	Male	20-25	1-1.5 lac (F)	BRAC University	Student	Mohakhali DOHS, Dhaka
20	Suman Islam	Male	20-25	1-2 lack(F)	Graduate	Student	Farmgate

The collected sample had a nearly even split between male and female participants, with 16 participants aged 20–25 and four participants aged 25–30. Fifteen were students, and the rest were drivers, entrepreneurs, and service holders. The participants had an average age of 20-35. They were from the middle and upper-middle classes, respectively. In the interviews, respondents were not confined to

specific questions and answers. They were asked about their preferences for liking different impertinent things. Their responses were recorded and transcribed. The primary responses were detected based on their expressions and implicit responses. Sometimes, the respondents were shown a photo and asked to identify branded items from that photo. Sometimes, the product was shown on Facebook and participants were asked who used these brands.

### **3.2 Data Collection Instrument**

Semi-structured Questionnaire was used to collect data which is attached at the end. The study recorded in-depth interviews and the transcripts of the recorded files. Photos were collected from social media to show their relevance to our study.

### **3.3 Data Collection Technique**

The data were collected in two ways. We used the ethnographic method for respondents of counterfeit and luxury use. The transcriptions of these two in-depth interviews were added as samples. Between these two interviews, the first interview was taken from the counterfeit brand user, and the second from the luxury brand user.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

Within the context of Bangladesh, we identified several distinct forms of copying. We identified three forms of copying based on the user intent. Using the photographs collected, the current evidence, and the background of Bangladesh.

### **4.1. Copying Us or Copying Them**

Most Bangladeshi people use copy brands, following others. Who is this someone? Most are from outside Bangladesh—heroes, players, people in business, models, singers, movie stars, politicians, and so on. A few youth copied Bangladeshi movie stars and drama actors. Most boys copied the style of Tallywood (Kolkata) and South Indian movie stars. The educated youth copy Bollywood and Hollywood movie stars, football and cricket players, and singers worldwide. The girls copied the Indian models and actresses. Age-old people copy with politicians and businessmen. They copied foreign celebrities, as they saw themselves as fans. A few village students tried to copy university students or people visiting Dhaka. However, Globalization has paved the way for anyone to follow the world.

Yang (2015) argued that globalization has accelerated the supply of counterfeit products. Globalization paves the way for obtaining information and using products for economic and cultural purposes.

Asiful Islam (male, age 18, from Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka) reveals whom the young boys like him of Bangladesh follow.

*Interviewer:* What about your shoe?

*Asiful Islam:* I followed the shoe used by Messi and Ronaldo in the play. I used this type of shoe when I played. We try to wear the shoes that our favorite players wear. There is a feeling of wearing your favorite player's shoe. This enhances the joy of the game.

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube provide updated information about the lifestyles of different celebrities worldwide. The Bangladeshi people followed Bangladeshi celebrities. Currently, they only cope with cricket celebrities such as Sakib-al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, and Taskin. Most people in Bangladesh now follow reference groups around the world.

The following pictures explain whom we are copying.





Figure 1. A boy coping with a brand.

Name: Sakib Shahoria, He is studying at the Sonargaon Polytechnic Institute, Dhaka. He is currently completing his internship program after finishing a four-year diploma. He is trying to copy South Indian movie stars, as he often watches Hindi, dubbed South Indian movies. However, he is trying to show his totality using a fake Adidas t-shirt. He is trying to cope with them (outside the country), not us (inside the country). We found a relationship between this picture and our research in terms of copying other people's styles and outfits. From the perspective of copy culture, they copied other people's outfits and styles, motions, looks, and attitudes. We can find a deep insight from this picture that a copy can be beyond the outfit or clothing, and it can reach human character and behavior.



Figure 2. These two boys try to pose like bangle movie stars in their fake American Eagle jeans and shirts.

Name: Hamidul Islam and Serajul Islam. They are currently working as sewing operators in an active group of the company (Readymade Garment Company). The picture was taken while they went to a picnic from the industry. These two boys are trying to pose like Bengali movie stars with their fake American Eagle jeans and shirts from the counterfeit brand. They are fans of Bengali movie heroes, which means they copy us. They copied the bangle movie heroes' clothing, poses, and attitudes. Their attitude toward copying is related to our research, as we are trying to explore the dimensions of copying in Bangladesh. This picture provides a new definition of copy that is beyond one's appearance and can reach the attitude, motion, style, posing, mentality, fitness, hairstyle, shape of the clothing, fitting the clothes, etc.

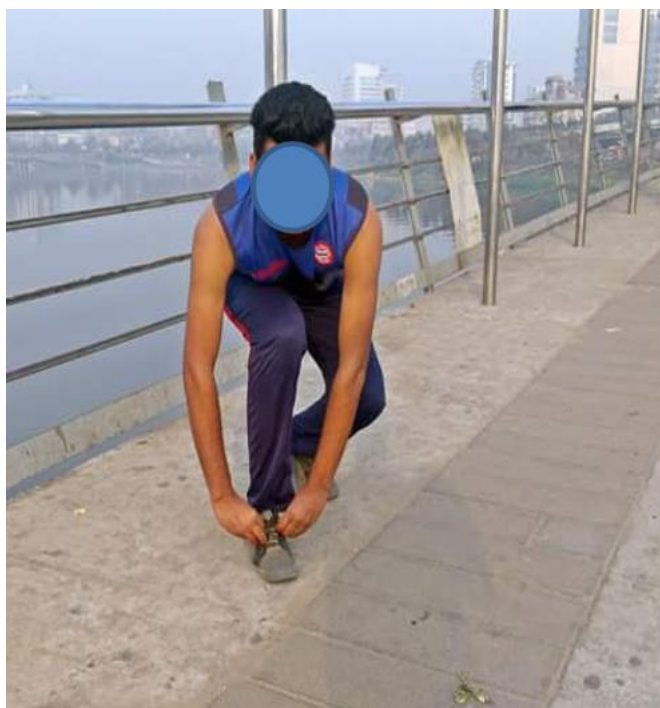


Figure 3. The boy tries to pose the shoe-tying style of Cristiano Ronaldo

Name: Moeshed Hasan. He is studying in the hons 2<sup>nd</sup> year at Dhaka College in the political science department. A photo was taken from Hatirjheel while he was walking in the morning. He followed Cristiano Ronaldo in every phase of his appearance. He is trying to use the shoe-tying style of Cristiano Ronaldo. He is trying to copy the attitude at that moment, as Cristiano Ronaldo shows. He has a hairstyle, fitness, and outfits his favorite player. The boy runs in the morning to maintain fitness and to follow his favorite player, as the player performs a lot of exercise and practice for better performance. He copies others rather than copying us. Our research aims to demythologize the sphere of copy culture that prevails in Bangladesh.

**Outcome:** Consumers of Bangladesh mostly Copying Them (Foreigners)

### ***Consumer Subjectivity as Individual***

Although Bangladeshi People follow celebrities across the globe, they have different consumption settings. They prioritize their looks and are eager to make any mix with the brand and copy. They often redesign clothes to fit the body, mend the copy product, and sew again after purchase. They show a new look at social media to receive comments from their friends. They focus on their style and the brand they use, regardless of whether the brand is real or fake. They use products on different occasions and events. They always try to express what they desire to be.

With the rise of casual wear, research has found that individuals seek new methods to differentiate themselves and show their individuality. They are conscious of how they come across others around

them. People convey information about themselves to their social networks by acquiring status symbols, such as cars, houses, and clothes. They represent an individual's spending habits and social status, or convey and enhance an individual's sense of self via symbolic communication.

Md Shayeful Islam (28 years old, from Tejgaon, Dhaka) said how he portrays his individual.

*Interviewer:* Do you enjoy the copy brand?

*Md Shayeful Islam:* yes, when I go to my village home, I share the information of pleasure with the younger brothers of my village as I purchase the product, which has an excellent outlook. The participants were then asked about the product. Next, I discuss the location. Sometimes I give the wrong location to prioritize them. I once provided false information about a pair of shoes. I said I purchased it from Basundhara City, as the shoe was perfect, and people believed it.

Asiful Islam (age 18 male from Banasree, Rampura, Dhaka) Explains his individuality.

*Interviewer.* How do you see perfumes to maintain your self-image?

*Asiful Islam.* Look, the perfume shows a lot. I show who you are. From where you are. Which class do you belong to? This is why perfume revealed much about us. A perfume supports you a lot.

*Interviewer.* How does a hair gel make a self-impression?

*Asiful Islam.* Hair gel will give your hair a good look, adding something to your clothing. The shape of the hair gel provides an image when a hair gel or mask is used. It will not give an appropriate look when you do not care for your hair. You are not one of the people in society. We all try to change the look every time we go out, and probably you also like it. However, there are some ordinary people. You will find two types of people: ordinary human beings and outfits.



Figure 4. The picture explains Consumer Subjectivity as an individual.

Faysal Ahmed. He is currently studying at East West University, Rampura Campus. He lived in Banasree, Rampura. He rides his father's car with his favorite appearance and poses in a selfie taken by his friend while driving. He does not pose the general pose that people have while taking selfies. He shows manly behavior as he wants to see himself as a real man. He copied the brand only for showoffs. He is at the center of the copying reason. His hairstyle, goggles, way of wearing a shirt, holding steering, charms, and everything are copied. However, he did not follow any specific celebrity or person. This man tries to demonstrate his personality and the class he desires to belong to. He was trying to show off

himself. This picture is very much related to our research, which seeks the dimension of copy in Bangladesh. We can gain insight from this picture to explain how people use it to show their personalities.



Figure 5. This boy poses with his outfit and goggles to have a manly expression in their peer group.

Mahabur rahman. He is now working as a package-supply boy of seven up to the different shops of Dhaka. The photo was taken at Chandrima Uddan while he visited one afternoon. This boy poses with his outfit and goggles to have a manly expression in their peer group. His haircut, eye style, goggles, using the figure, wrapping the piece of cloth at the neck, and shirt are copied from a different person, but he shows his appearance by prioritizing himself.



Figure 6. The boy is posing like the models of Bangladesh, but copying clothing and attitude.

Rabiul Islam. He is currently studying civil engineering in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Dhaka Polytechnic. Photos were taken from the park while visiting one day. This boy also poses with his outfit and goggles to have a manly expression in their peer group. He is posing like the models of Bangladesh but copying clothing

and attitude. This is related to our research, in which we explore how to copy others. This picture provides an insight into copying others to show off as individuals.

**Outcome:** Bangladeshi users' intention to copy to present themselves as an individual.

### ***Fragmented Authenticity***

The people of Bangladesh have the mentality to use the product that their reference group uses. They try to maintain their clothing and other matters to look like the desired person. However, until last, they usually fail to maintain authenticity. They used the fake created by the authentic layer-by-layer. Multilayer copying does not provide any characteristics of that particular authentic brand. The resemblance of an authentic brand gives users satisfaction. Their approaches are false, but every portion is made from different authentic products.

Moriom akter (Panthapath, Dhaka), Talking about her usage style

*Interviewer:* Do they have their own 'idea' for kinds of consumption?

*Moriom Akter:* whenever I am in an ordinary place, and I am just sitting with my friends or someone else, that time I don't prefer the brand. I wear comfortable products. However, when I am at a party, I think about uniqueness. I will buy any product that makes me unique to the people at the party, and I will love it to buy. Anyway, I am at a party for any function, and I do not think about the brand at the time. I think about good looks and uniqueness.



Figure 7. This picture explains Fragmented Authenticity.

Minhaj Hussain. He is studying in High School. A photo was taken while coming from the school. He uses these outfits to attract others and displays his appearance as a complete package of authentic products. This photo is highly related to our research, where we are trying to reveal the total copy from different authentic products. His hat is copied from a branded hat that is authentic, his shirt is copied from an authentic luxury brand, and he poses with his watch, which is also copied. All products show their appearance, which is full of fakes, but all products are derived from authentic brands. This will help us determine that fragmented authenticity prevails in Bangladesh.



Figure 8. The boy shows his shoe logo intentionally, posing as an authentic user, but the total package is not authentic.

Anupom Ador. He is currently studying civil engineering at Sonargaon Polytechnic in Dhaka. He copied goggles, t-shirts, pants, and shoes from an authentic brand. He is showing his shoe logo intentionally, posing as an authentic user, but the entire package is not authentic. His emotions were not fake, but his motions were. His style of sitting and looking reveals that he tried to act as an authentic user, but all products were copied from different authentic brands. This picture will help us explain the fragmented authenticity among users.



Figure 9. The boy is the complete man of a copy product.

Rabiul Islam. He is currently studying civil engineering in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Dhaka Polytechnic. Photographs were taken while roaming on the campus. Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt, Adidas sneakers, goggles, jeans, and intentionally posing with a bag in the middle of the campus roadshow fragmented authenticity. His looks and attitudes expressed the man he wanted to be. However, looking at the Adidas sneakers he copied, his watch, the Tommy Hilfiger t-shirt he tried to fit with his body, and the bag he

showed in the picture to show a complete man. However, he was a complete man of copied products. All the things he is using are copied from different authentic brands. The picture ultimately agreed with our theme of “fragmented authenticity.” This is a crucial part of copy culture, where most Bangladeshi people creatively use copy products.

**Outcome:** Bangladeshi users are copying but have multi-layered copy products from authentic brands.

Outcomes:

1. Consumers in Bangladesh mostly copied foreign celebrities.
2. Consumers’ intention to copy to present themselves as individuals.
3. They are copying, but have multi-layered copy products from authentic brands.

#### ***4.2. Discussion***

Every aspect of Bangladeshi life has been impacted by copy culture; however, studies on this subject are still limited. Some research has focused on counterfeiting authentic brands, but no one has seen that the copy is happening as creative. This study conceptualizes the copy culture of Bangladesh, the dimension of copying in Bangladeshi society, distinguishing it from typical counterfeiting, and identifies the nature of copying under counterfeit consumption. Furthermore, the paradigm of demythologizing copy consumption presented here adds to the continuing discussion on counterfeit brand co-creation by providing a framework that comprehensively explains the difference between whomever they are copying and how they copy. This study shows that not all counterfeit consumption has these characteristics. This study clarifies the variety of copy cultures and co-creation that takes place inside them. This research extends the existing understanding of the nature of copies. The dimensions include (1) fashion, (2) entertainment, (3) cosmetics, (4) daily necessary products, (5) electronic goods, and (6) medicine consumption.

##### ***Phase 1***

We find three outcomes of demythologizing the copy culture of Bangladesh. First, consumers in Bangladesh have mostly copied foreign celebrities. The Internet and globalization have led to increased knowledge of style, fashion, and brands, which has instigated copying in Bangladesh. People are following celebrities worldwide and trying to transfer their personalities among them. Therefore, they try to copy clothing, attitude, style, and fashion from that favorite person. Global counterfeit consumption increased due to the Euro-American spell of Western imperialist ideology (Pathak et al., 2019). He also discussed ‘logocentrism,’ which refers to Western metaphysics that enhances the logo in the brand. That is how consumers in Bangladesh watch the logo from celebrities’ clothes and opt to obtain it. However, they do not have that much money, so they are copying their personalities to resemble them.

##### ***Phase 2***

The second is consumers’ intention to copy and present themselves as individuals. Owing to the casual clothing trend, people have been driven to look for new methods to differentiate themselves and exhibit their personalities (Chand & Fei, 2021). They are very concerned about the impressions they make on others. People in Bangladesh use counterfeit products for creativity in their lifestyles.

To compare the first findings (copying foreign celebrities) with the second findings (presenting themselves) of the study (Bian et al., 2015). He stated that a person's consumption habits also serve as a representation of their social class status, and that this influences their purchasing decisions. Bangladeshi people follow these celebrities and try to be like them, but do not have enough money to have branded authentic products. They then start their creativity with the copy product and think of themselves as creative consumers. They are creative in their counterfeit brands to extend their identity.

##### ***Phase 3***

Bangladeshis are copying but have multilayered copy products from authentic brands. They enjoy co-creation under a counterfeit brand. They are trying to maintain their image, which is a crucial factor in

Bangladesh. To maintain the image of a person who has less money, they need to take help from the creativity of the product. Creativity is crucial in this process.

Comparing the third finding (multi-layered copy) with the second finding (present themselves), we can say that the people of Bangladesh use co-creation with the creativity of the counterfeit brand to present themselves. In Bangladesh, locals purchase counterfeits or branded goods from various companies. The products are copied, but are produced from authentic brands. The multilayered production mechanism produces products with the same appearance.

To justify the third finding (multilayered copy) with the first finding (copying foreign celebrities), we can say that consumers perceive it as celebrities. However, the shortage of money drives them toward co-creation under the counterfeit brand. Varela et al. (2021) explained in their theory that the development of the world will make a distinction between classes towards the acquisition of property. This property has now become the most easily recognized evidence of a reputable degree of success. For this reason, consumers in Bangladesh are trying to copy their favorite person and use co-creation to adjust their looking.

After all these discussions, we can conclude three findings in one sentence that consumers of Bangladesh copy celebrities worldwide to present themselves as creative on counterfeit brands.

## 5. Conclusion

The primary goal of this study is to shed light on the nature of the copying phenomenon in Bangladesh. The research question was "Does a consumer enjoy using a copy brand? Where was the copy level reached in Bangladesh? What do Bangladeshi people think about coping? The research objectives were fulfilled in different parts of the study. We studied the demythologizing copy culture in Bangladesh in the context of counterfeit consumption. Our three outcomes outlined how to copy others and how the copy can occur if shown using different pictures. Finally, we can provide a new definition of copy with the help of research. "Copy is not only copying product, but it can be attitude, behavior, style, character, motion, etc.

Convenient sampling was utilized, which has the potential benefit of laying the groundwork for future research or facilitating the establishment of connections with previously established findings, but also the drawback of being unable to generalize the study results. Specifically, as a constraint, we could not conduct interviews with customers at their places of employment. Although the interviewer was solely based in Dhaka, the focus was on Bangladesh. The two most common limitations of scientific inquiries are time and money. Considering the time constraints of an academic study, this study used only a handful of massage parlours. I would have liked to survey a larger sample of parlours if I had the opportunity to do so, to generalize better and conclude about the industry as a whole. I would have conducted tests and made comparisons to the whole nation, in addition to examining the functioning of this copy culture.

### 5.1. Directions for future research

This study focused on the behavioral perspective of copy brand users and did not focus on the connection between suppliers and manufacturers for counterfeit consumption. In summary, additional research on this topic is required. The research topic was interesting, but further studies are required to address its limitations and findings. Additional research might focus on the link between suppliers and manufacturers for counterfeit consumption, as this study did not consider the manufacturer's viewpoint of copy culture.

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