



COUNTERFEIT PRODUCT SALES IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES

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Abstract

This paper examines counterfeit product sales in traditional markets and the public attitudes that sustain or contest such transactions. It frames counterfeits as goods that imitate brand markers and thereby shape perceived value through signals, narratives, and seller claims. The discussion distinguishes open disclosure from implicit claims that create ambiguity about authenticity, and it explains how pricing, visual cues, and repeated interactions influence buyer belief formation. Public attitudes are described as a structured set of economic, moral, and social judgments that can produce tolerance, ambivalence, or rejection. Market trust is treated as both personal reliance on familiar vendors and collective reputation attached to the market, each shaping expectations and dispute avoidance. The paper highlights information asymmetry and the role of local norms of honesty in determining whether transactions are viewed as fair exchange or as misleading conduct. It also clarifies how normalization can arise when community narratives soften ethical concerns and when buyers accept uncertainty as an ordinary cost of shopping. The paper concludes that the interaction between seller communication and buyer attitudes forms a feedback loop that stabilizes practices or raises social pressure for clearer disclosure and fair dealing.

Keywords: counterfeits, traditional markets, consumer attitudes, seller claims, information asymmetry, market trust, fair dealing.

Introduction

Traditional markets are exchange spaces that bring together sellers and buyers through close relationships, direct communication, and open price negotiations. In this space, consumption decisions are often shaped by shopping habits, social proximity, and immediate practical needs. The goods traded are diverse, ranging from basic necessities to fashion products and accessories that feature specific brands. Amidst this diversity, there also emerges the practice of selling counterfeit products that imitate brand markers, designs, or attributes associated with original products. This practice often exists as part of the local economic dynamics, as traditional markets accommodate business actors with limited capital and buyers with varying purchasing power. Buying and selling interactions in traditional markets also highlight the element of trust, namely the buyer's confidence in the seller's explanation, the quality of the goods, and the fairness of the price. When counterfeit products circulate, this element of trust is tested, because buyers must interpret information that is not always complete (Hansen & Møller, 2017). This dynamic reflects the importance of understanding market interactions for goods that continue to evolve in line with the implications of prevailing macroeconomic policies (Jahroni & Darmawan, 2018). This situation opens space for diverse public attitudes, from pragmatic acceptance to normative rejection, both of which influence the sustainability of counterfeit product sales practices.

The practice of selling counterfeit products in traditional markets is often discussed as part of the consumption reality that runs in parallel with economic needs (Abid et al., 2022). Some buyers prioritize the basic function of the goods and consider brand identity as a complement, so counterfeit products are viewed as adequate as long as the goods can be used. Other buyers view brands as a guarantee of quality and a status symbol, so counterfeit products are judged as misleading or damaging to consumption values. These differing assessments indicate that public attitudes toward counterfeit products are not monolithic, but are determined by how people evaluate quality, price, and legitimacy. In traditional markets, the seller's explanation regarding the origin of the goods can vary, from open statements that the goods are counterfeit to vague statements regarding equivalent quality. Buyers respond in diverse ways as well, including asking, bargaining, or choosing to remain silent because they consider the

information difficult to verify. Close social relationships can make buyers reluctant to question too harshly, because maintaining good relations with traders is considered important for daily shopping needs. In this condition, the role of social networks is proven to be very significant in helping business actors gain access to wider markets and maintain the continuity of their businesses (Lestari & Mardikaningsih, 2012). Thus, the practice of selling counterfeit products and public attitudes intertwine in a pattern of interaction that organizes moral choices, economic choices, and social choices within a single transaction space.

Imitation products are not merely an issue of goods, but also an issue of signs, claims, and perceptions. Such products generally imitate the elements that make original goods recognizable, such as logos, packaging designs, or names that resemble famous brands (Robinson & McDuié-Ra, 2018). This imitation has the potential to shape perceptions that the goods possess certain origins and quality standards, even though this is not the case in reality. In traditional markets, buyers often rely on simple indicators, such as the appearance of the goods, the seller's statements, or previous experience. When simple indicators are used, purchasing decisions can be driven by untested beliefs. At this point, societal attitudes can be read as responses to information uncertainty. Some people accept uncertainty and view it as a normal part of transactions, while others demand certainty and avoid risk. Additionally, imitation products can be perceived as an entryway for consumers to obtain a style or function similar to branded products without high costs. This perception can drive the normalization of imitation products as a consumption choice. However, normalization also raises questions about trade ethics, fairness for brand owners, and protection for consumers against misleading information. This issue demands strong legal protection for famous brands in Indonesia, given the global challenges in confronting product counterfeitzation that are becoming increasingly complex (Yani et al., 2023).

Traditional markets have a distinctive governance character, with oversight often relying on local customs, market rules, and relationships among traders, managers, and authorities (Dewey, 2019). In such spaces, regulation of goods often confronts the reality that many traders depend on rapid goods turnover to meet family needs. Imitation products can enter through supply chains that are not always traceable by small traders,

because traders often purchase from suppliers based on price and availability. Under such conditions, traders' understanding of the authenticity status of goods can vary, from full knowledge to intentional ignorance. Societal attitudes as buyers are also influenced by local consumption norms. On the other hand, every business actor needs to pay attention to cost behavior and its categorization to make more accurate strategic decisions (Sinambela & Djaelani, 2022). Additionally, operational efficiency through break-even point analysis becomes crucial as a cost control tool for business sustainability in the market (Sinambela et al., 2022). This difference underscores the importance of distinguishing between transactions that occur with mutual awareness and transactions that involve misleading claims. This distinction determines how to assess moral responsibility and legal responsibility in the practice of selling imitation products.

Societal attitudes toward imitation products can also be understood through social considerations inherent in consumption. Consumption is often related to self-image, social acceptance, and the need to display a particular identity. Branded products have symbolic value, so imitation products offer symbolic access at a lower cost. In traditional markets, this access can feel more open because of the bargaining process and diversity of quality. Buyers can choose goods with a certain grade associated as quality imitations or ordinary imitations. This choice indicates an internal classification within the market that shapes buyers' practical knowledge. However, practical knowledge is not always accompanied by normative awareness of broader social consequences, such as impacts on market reputation, consumer trust, and trade legitimacy. Societal attitudes can span a wide range, from permissive attitudes that view transactions as matters of mutual agreement to critical attitudes that view such practices as damaging to fair trade systems. To maintain their position amidst intense market competition, strategies to address customer loyalty erosion and product development processes aligned with market needs must become priorities for traders (Sinambela & Aprilianti, 2011, 2012).

The problem description that needs to be explained is the ambiguity of the normative framework in understanding the practice of selling imitation products in traditional markets as an interaction between traders' economic interests, buyers' consumption choices, and legal

protection rules. Discussion often stops at the assessment that imitation products violate certain norms, but insufficiently organizes the social mechanisms that make such practice acceptable to some segments of society. Without organizing these mechanisms, it is difficult to explain how the practice becomes habitual and how habits shape tolerance. In daily transactions, traders and buyers can build implicit mutual understanding regarding the status of goods. This mutual understanding can reduce conflict, but it can also normalize brand imitation as something considered ordinary. At the same time, there are situations where buyers lack adequate awareness of the goods' status, so the transaction contains potential misleading. Ethical principles in Indonesian legal advocacy emphasize the importance of professional integrity to maintain justice in every dispute, including in intellectual property disputes (Saktiawan et al., 2021). A conceptual problem arises when legal assessment and moral assessment are not properly distinguished, so that the trader's responsibility, the supplier's responsibility, and the information obligations in transactions become blurred. A normative scientific description is needed to separate the categories of transactions, the categories of knowledge of the parties, and the categories of claims inherent in the goods.

The next problem description is the ambiguity regarding the structure of societal attitudes that form demand and social legitimacy for imitation products. Societal attitudes are often referred to as agree or disagree, but this category is too coarse to explain consumption practices in traditional markets. Attitudes can encompass assessments of price, assessments of quality, assessments of seller honesty, and assessments of moral consequences. Attitudes can also include tolerance toward imitation when buyers feel the price already signals that the goods are not authentic. Conversely, attitudes can turn into rejection when buyers judge that there is an attempt to deceive through claims of authenticity. It is also important to highlight how good corporate governance can enhance organizational transparency and sustainability in facing global market competition (Rojak & Al Hakim, 2023). Additionally, the effectiveness of regulations such as Undang-Undang No. 5 Tahun 1999 in handling cross-border business competition becomes an important parameter for a broader legal framework (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). This ambivalence needs to be

explained because it can fuel the sustainability of imitation product sales practices in traditional markets.

This paper aims to build a systematic normative explanation of the practice of selling imitation products in traditional markets and the accompanying societal attitudes. This explanation is important to organize the boundary between transactions that occur with sufficient knowledge and transactions that contain misleading, so that the discussion does not become trapped in generalizations. In the realm of consumer protection and trademark rights, conceptual organization is needed to explain information obligations, standards of honesty, and forms of responsibility relevant to the character of traditional markets. In the realm of economic sociology, conceptual organization is needed to explain how consumption habits and social relations shape tolerance toward imitation products. Urgency is also evident from the need to maintain public trust in traditional markets as spaces for the people's economy. Trust requires comprehensibility about quality, goods origin, and congruence between price and claims. When imitation product practices circulate without organized knowledge and attitudes, market reputation can weaken. Therefore, an orderly normative study can become a conceptual basis for academic discussion, policy formulation, and realistic trade ethics guidance without presenting field data.

The problem formulation in this writing is as follows: how do the practice of selling imitation products in traditional markets and societal attitudes mutually shape each other in the relationship between claims of authenticity, value perceptions, and normative assessments of trade honesty? This question focuses on the conceptual mechanisms that connect traders' actions, buyers' interpretations, and the normalization of practices in market space. This formulation demands an explanation of different forms of transactions, for example, transactions accompanied by open disclosure and transactions accompanied by misleading claims. This formulation also demands an explanation of the structure of societal attitudes, including tolerance, ambivalence, and rejection, and how that structure organizes demand. With a sharp question, the writing can elaborate the relationship between ethics, law, and economic practice without shifting to issues of numerical measurement or field findings. This

question also provides space to discuss consumer protection principles and principles of respect for trademark rights conceptually.

The objective of this writing is to develop a normative framework regarding the relationship between the practice of selling counterfeit products in traditional markets and public attitudes during transactions. This writing organizes categories of authenticity claims, information disclosure, and forms of buyer awareness. It also maps the structure of public attitudes, including tolerance and rejection, as well as their connection to perceptions of value and trade honesty. Theoretically, this framework clarifies the mechanisms of normalizing practices through market habits and social relations. Practically, this framework provides a conceptual reference for merchant development and consumer education.

Method

This study utilizes a qualitative literature study with a normative legal research orientation to develop a conceptual synthesis regarding the practice of selling counterfeit products in traditional markets and public attitudes. The primary materials consist of legal sources, doctrines, and scientific works discussing consumer protection, trademark rights, trade ethics, and consumption behavior. Susiani (2024) is used to organize the legal research steps, particularly in determining issues, tracing legal materials, and forming consistent arguments from norms toward conclusions. Firmanto et al. (2024) is employed to strengthen the orderliness of scientific writing in the legal field, including how to construct a conceptual framework, separate primary and secondary legal materials, and maintain terminological precision. The writing positions the traditional market as a transaction space with strong social relationship characteristics, ensuring that normative assessments do not stop at formal prohibitions but also weigh the principles of honesty, information certainty, and transaction fairness as part of protection standards.

Material processing is carried out through systematic reading and thematic coding of recurring concepts, such as authenticity claims, misleading information, information disclosure, and forms of public attitudes like tolerance and rejection. Irianto (2011) is used to enrich the way of reading the relationship between legal norms and social practices through a socio-legal perspective, specifically when explaining how market

habits and seller-buyer relations shape social acceptance of counterfeit products. Variations in citation styles are applied to ensure a fluid narrative, for example, narrative forms such as Susiani (2024) and parenthetical forms such as (Firmanto et al., 2024). Conceptual validity is maintained through consistency of definitions, the distinction between transactions with disclosure and transactions with misleading claims, and a strict limitation that this writing does not utilize interviews or field observations. The results are presented as a normative synthesis that links legal principles and social assessments in explaining the sustainability of counterfeit product practices in traditional markets.

Result and Discussion

Regulations regarding imitation products in Indonesia are strictly enforced to protect intellectual property right holders and consumers from unfair trade practices. The primary legal basis prohibiting the circulation of imitation products rests on Law No. 20 of 2016 concerning Trademarks and Geographical Indications, which grants exclusive rights to registered trademark owners to use the trademark or authorize others to do so. Within this legal framework, the use of a trademark that is identical in entirety or substantially similar to another party's registered trademark for similar goods is categorized as a legal violation that can incur criminal or civil penalties. It is important to remember that every business sustainability strategy must be able to adapt in facing regulatory uncertainty and dynamic managerial challenges on the ground (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2021). In this regard, entrepreneurs need to optimize appropriate cognitive strategies to mitigate risks arising from conditions of radical uncertainty in the market (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2014).

In addition to trademark aspects, protection against imitation products also intersects with Law No. 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright, especially if the product imitates artistic works, graphic designs, or other protected creations without the creator's permission. Violations in the form of piracy or illegal duplication of works for commercial purposes are threatened with imprisonment and very large fines (Maharani et al., 2024). This regulation aims to ensure that the economic value of an innovation and creativity remains attached to its creator, while

simultaneously preventing confusion among the public due to the circulation of non-authentic goods. However, in practice, copyright holders often face various obstacles that hinder their efforts to file civil legal suits against violators (Hardyansah et al., 2021).

From the public protection side, Law No. 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection prohibits business actors from producing or trading goods that do not meet the required standards or do not conform to promises stated in labels and product descriptions. Imitation products often fail to meet quality and safety standards, so their existence is considered detrimental to consumer interests both financially and in terms of physical safety (Septiatiarini et al., 2024). Business actors who deceive consumers by selling imitation goods as if they were authentic can be legally pursued on the basis of unlawful acts and misleading information. Therefore, effective quality control implementation is highly necessary for micro, small, and medium enterprises despite limited resources, to guarantee compliance with applicable standards (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2015).

Legal enforcement against the circulation of imitation products in physical and digital markets is strengthened through Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, as it has been amended several times. In the electronic commerce (e-commerce) ecosystem, digital platform providers have responsibility to conduct supervision and enforcement against stores or accounts selling illegal or imitation goods (Fitri et al., 2024). This provision forces marketplace managers to provide intellectual property rights violation reporting features to facilitate trademark holders in conducting take down or removal of product content proven to infringe their rights.

In terms of enforcement technique, the Directorate General of Intellectual Property collaborates with the Indonesian National Police and Customs and Excise to conduct supervision at international trade entry points as well as domestic markets. Based on Government Regulation No. 20 of 2017 concerning Control of Import or Export of Goods Suspected to Be or Originating from Results of Intellectual Property Violations, Customs and Excise has authority to conduct temporary seizure or detention of imported goods strongly suspected as imitation products (Indrawati, 2024). This mechanism is a preventive

step to maintain the Indonesian market from an influx of counterfeit products that can damage the national industrial structure. Additionally, legal responsibility for corporate management must also be a primary concern for startup directors in maintaining their compliance and authority in the eyes of law (Nugroho et al., 2024). This effort is also supported by reconciliation of national law and international agreements that are crucial to provide legal certainty for MSMEs, especially in export-import activities (Kusuma et al., 2024).

As a protective measure for business actors and MSMEs, regulations encourage registering intellectual assets as early as possible because Indonesia adopts a first-to-file system. Without an official registration certificate, the original owner will have difficulty making legal claims against parties producing imitations (Martinelli et al., 2023). Awareness to check the intellectual property rights data base and register works legally becomes the main defense wall in facing business competition colored by imitation practices, while simultaneously increasing consumer trust value regarding the originality of marketed products. The sustainability of micro enterprises in competitive markets also heavily depends on strong positioning strategy and brand equity as differentiation from imitation products (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2013). This aligns with the need for business development strategies, particularly in the culinary sector, which must be based on strengthening local identity as a key to business sustainability amidst the onslaught of the global market (Hariani et al., 2015).

The practice of selling imitation products in traditional markets can be understood as a series of trade actions connecting suppliers, traders, and buyers through value claims that often rest on brand markers (Maghfirah et al., 2023). In this mechanism, imitation products function as symbolic substitutes, namely offering an appearance resembling original products at lower costs. Traditional markets provide space for symbolic substitutes because their transaction system gives flexibility on quality and price negotiation. Buyers can assess goods through sight and touch, bargain, then make quick decisions. Traders adjust explanations according to transaction needs, ranging from straightforward explanations regarding quality to explanations emphasizing brand similarity. Within the normative framework, the crucial point is the relationship between price and claims. Price can be a signal that goods

are not authentic, but this signal is not always sufficient because verbal claims can add perceptions of authenticity. When signals collide, buyers are in the zone of uncertainty. In this zone, societal attitudes become decisive, because attitudes regulate whether buyers accept uncertainty as part of the transaction or demand certainty as a condition for fair trade. Therefore, imitation product practices must be read together with the structure of societal attitudes that form demand and social legitimacy. Efforts to build sustainable public policy must always balance economic interests, social aspects, and environmental sustainability so as not to harm the public broadly (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021).

The meaning of imitation products differs between parties prioritizing function and parties prioritizing brand identity. For buyers prioritizing function, the main thing is that goods can be used, last for a reasonable period, and meet practical needs. In this position, brands are understood as secondary attributes, so brand imitation is viewed as not determining utility value (Kastowo & Christiani, 2024). For buyers prioritizing brand identity, brand markers become part of the goods' value, both as quality assurance and as status symbols. In this position, imitation is viewed as an illegitimate form of claim. Within the normative framework, this difference in meaning affects how buyers assess trader honesty. If buyers view brands as important, they demand clear disclosure about goods status. If buyers view brands as not important, they can consider disclosure unnecessary as long as price and quality align. This difference forms variations in societal attitudes, ranging from permissive, ambivalent, to rejecting. These attitude variations subsequently influence how traders construct narratives. Traders tend to maintain narratives that best suit demand patterns. Thus, societal attitudes and sales practices mutually reinforce each other through market adaptation mechanisms dependent on value perceptions.

Claims of authenticity can be categorized into several conceptual forms relevant for assessing transaction fairness. First, an explicit claim that the goods are authentic, which places the trader in the position of making a factual statement. Second, an implicit claim through the use of brand markers and highlighting similarity without directly stating authenticity. Third, open disclosure that the goods are imitations or replicas, which places the buyer in a condition of knowing the basic status

of the goods. Fourth, mixed claims, where the trader states equivalent quality while avoiding discussion of authenticity. Within the normative framework, the form of claim determines the structure of error that may occur to the buyer. Explicit claims and implicit claims have the potential to create relevant errors, because buyers can assume the goods have an incorrect origin. Open disclosure reduces the risk of error, but still requires buyers to understand quality and warranty consequences. Mixed claims create ambiguity that can benefit traders because it leaves buyers to conclude on their own. This ambiguity can facilitate normalization of imitation products because conflict rarely arises directly. However, ambiguity can also damage long-term trust if buyers later feel deceived. Distinguishing claim forms is important for organizing discussion of societal attitudes, because attitudes are often constructed as responses to different claim experiences. The importance of transparency in disclosing ownership status and actual identity as relevant in beneficial ownership disclosure for closed companies becomes key in strengthening the integrity of the economic system and preventing illegal practices such as money laundering (Setyastomo et al., 2024).

Societal attitudes toward imitation products can be arranged as a structure of assessment that combines economic considerations, moral considerations, and social considerations (Saha & Mathew, 2019). Economic considerations relate to affordability, risk of loss, and preference for adequate goods (Yieh et al., 2021). Moral considerations relate to trade honesty, respect for trademark rights, and objections to misleading. Social considerations relate to self-image, environmental acceptance, and local consumption norms. Within the normative framework, these three considerations do not always run in the same direction. A person can reject imitation products morally, yet still buy them due to economic needs. A person can accept imitation products economically, yet avoid purchasing due to fear of being negatively judged by their environment. This structure produces ambivalent attitudes often visible in consumption practices. This ambivalence is important because it creates a sufficiently large market to sustain the circulation of imitation products, while simultaneously creating a space of criticism that limits traders' openness. Traders then adjust their selling methods so as not to openly create moral conflict. Thus, societal attitudes are not merely opinions, but rather an assessment

structure that organizes actions, communication, and normalization in traditional markets. In this dynamics, clashes often occur between local values held by traditional communities and modern marketing approaches (such as green marketing), showing that integration of social values in economic practices requires understanding.

Normalization of imitation products can be explained as a process where repeated practices become habits considered ordinary (Abid et al., 2022). In traditional markets, this process occurs through social learning, where buyers tell each other about places to buy, goods quality, and bargaining methods. Social learning can strengthen the belief that imitation products are part of legitimate consumption choices, especially when usage experience does not cause significant loss. Normalization can also be reinforced by language that softens, for example referring to goods as local versions or other terms avoiding the word imitation. Within the normative framework, such language changes moral perception, because brand imitation is no longer understood as a violation but rather as product variation. The normalization process can also change buyers' caution standards. If buyers consider purchasing imitation products to be normal, buyers can lower information demands. Lowering information demands expands space for implicit claims. At the same time, normalization can generate tolerance toward quality ambiguity, because buyers judge risk as a price worth paying (Alcalá et al., 2014). Thus, normalization is a mechanism that explains the sustainability of imitation product practices without requiring explanation about coercion. Normalization works through habits, narratives, and adjustment of expectations in daily transactions.

Trust relationships in traditional markets have a strong personal character. Buyers often subscribe to particular traders because of closeness, prices considered fair, or satisfactory experiences (Jackson, 2019). Within the normative framework, this trust can facilitate transactions, but it can also become a gap when buyers reduce verification. If traders exploit trust to convey misleading claims, buyers' losses can increase. Conversely, if traders maintain trust through honest disclosure about goods status, subscription relationships can become an informal consumer protection mechanism. This shows that trader ethics and buyer attitudes interact in forming market quality. Trust is also formed by the overall market reputation. When a

market is known to sell imitation products widely, buyers will come with certain expectations. Expectations can reduce the feeling of being deceived because buyers have already anticipated. However, expectations can also reduce the market's ability to become a credible trading space for original products. Thus, trust is layered, encompassing personal trust and institutional trust. Imitation product practices test both layers. Societal attitudes toward trust determine whether they consider imitation products as a normal risk or as a violation of honesty standards.

There is a normative difference between purchasing imitation products with full awareness and purchasing imitation products due to error triggered by claims. Purchase with full awareness can be understood as a transaction closer to value agreement, namely buyers choose goods based on price and similarity while acknowledging quality limitations (Pratiwi & Prastyanti, 2023). In this transaction, the main problem is more related to the legitimacy of brand imitation and implications for brand owners, not to direct misleading toward buyers. Conversely, purchase due to error places the buyer as a party acting based on mistaken belief. Within the normative framework, relevant error demands attention because it relates to the buyer's right to correct information. Societal attitudes toward these two types of transactions can differ. Society can tolerate transactions with full awareness, yet reject transactions containing misleading. This difference is important for discussion because it organizes the moral boundary society uses to assess traders. Traders who sell imitations openly can still be accepted, whereas traders who conceal can be rejected. Thus, this distinction explains why imitation product practices can persist without generating major conflict, since some transactions occur in mutual awareness. However, this distinction also shows market reputation risk when the boundary of openness becomes blurred.

Value perception in imitation product transactions is often determined by the relationship between price, appearance, and usage experience (Li & Ye, 2022). Buyers assess whether the price is fair for estimated quality. This assessment is practical, because buyers rarely have formal verification tools. Within the normative framework, value perception becomes a bridge between economic considerations and moral considerations. If buyers judge that the price already marks imitation status, they can feel not deceived. However, if traders emphasize

authenticity while giving a higher price, buyers can consider the price as evidence of authenticity, so error occurs. This shows the importance of price signals in forming beliefs. However, price signals can be manipulated. When signals are manipulated, consumer protection weakens. Societal attitudes toward price and value are also influenced by collective experience, for example stories that certain products last long even though imitations. Such stories strengthen value perception and expand demand. Thus, value perception is a mechanism that stabilizes imitation markets through experience and narratives. Because value perception does not always align with legal norms, normative discussion needs to organize how value perception shapes social tolerance toward practices that are in principle questionable.

Trade ethics in traditional markets often manifest in local honesty norms. These norms are not always formalized, yet work through social assessment and reputation (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Traders considered honest tend to gain regular customers, whereas traders considered deceptive tend to be avoided. Within the normative framework, these local norms can function as social control. However, social control has limitations when information does not spread evenly or when new buyers do not know trader reputation. Imitation products place honesty norms under test because the boundary between promotion and misleading can become blurred. Traders can use ambiguous phrases to maintain sales, while buyers can choose to ignore ambiguity for cheap prices. In such situations, honesty norms can shift from factual honesty about authenticity to honesty about price and quality match. This shift has important normative implications because it changes the standard of what is considered fair. If the standard of fairness becomes merely price matching quality, brand claims can be treated as decoration. However, if the standard of fairness includes truth of brand information, then brand claims must be correct. Societal attitudes will determine which standard is dominant. Therefore, trade ethics and societal attitudes mutually shape in determining the boundary of fairness in imitation product sales practices.

Trademark rights and consumer protection provide a normative framework for assessing imitation product practices (Budiman et al., 2017). At the principle level, consumer protection demands correct information, fair treatment, and recovery mechanisms when losses occur.

Trademark rights demand respect for commercial identity and prevention of misleading imitation. In normative discussion, these two frameworks meet on the issue of claims, namely whether goods are presented in a way that creates an impression of authenticity. Imitation products that exploit brands can cause confusion, especially when differences are not clear to consumers. In traditional markets, confusion can increase because transactions occur quickly and buyers lack strong evidence. Societal attitudes toward this normative framework can vary. Some segments of society view brand rules as matters for large companies, so they do not feel morally bound. Some segments view brand rules as quality protection, so they feel it is important. This difference shapes social acceptance of imitation practices. If social acceptance is high, social pressure on traders is low. If social acceptance is low, traders must conceal or change their selling methods. Thus, legal norms and social attitudes interact in forming market practices. This discussion demands distinction between legal assessment and social assessment so that conclusions do not simplify consumption behavior.

The imitation product supply chain is often understood as a distribution route involving suppliers, wholesale traders, and retail traders. In normative discussion without data, the supply chain can be treated as a layered responsibility structure (Wang et al., 2020). Retail traders are the parties facing consumers directly and conveying claims. However, retail traders often depend on suppliers for information about goods origin. This dependence can become a reason for traders to avoid moral responsibility, for example by stating that they only sell available goods. From the consumer protection perspective, this reason does not yet answer the honesty obligation in conveying information. From the trademark rights perspective, the circulation of imitations involves many actors, so responsibility cannot be centered on one point only. Societal attitudes toward this responsibility structure can influence how they demand clarity. When society demands clarity from traders, traders are driven to choose suppliers that are clearer. When society is passive, traders lack social incentives to improve the supply chain. Thus, societal attitudes function as normative pressure that influences practice standards, even if not always stated as formal demands. This confirms that imitation product

sustainability is not merely about supply, but also about social tolerance toward claim ambiguity.

There is a relationship between buyers' economic status and tolerance level toward imitation products, but this relationship should not be simplified as determinism (Taufik et al., 2022). Conceptually, purchasing power limitations can drive search for cheaper goods, so imitation products become an alternative. However, moral preferences and quality preferences still play a role, because buyers can choose to reduce purchase quantity rather than buy imitations. In traditional markets, buyers can also choose unbranded products as a middle ground. Societal attitudes toward imitation products are therefore formed by a combination of affordability and preferences. Affordability influences opportunity, while preferences influence choice. Within the normative framework, it is important to distinguish buyers pursuing brand symbols and buyers pursuing function. Buyers pursuing brand symbols can choose imitations to obtain the appearance. Buyers pursuing function can choose generic goods without brand markers. This difference influences how traders organize goods and narratives. When symbol demand is high, traders tend to display logoed goods. When function demand is high, traders can focus on material quality. Thus, demand structure is formed by attitudes and preferences, not merely by economic limitations. This discussion clarifies that societal attitudes are a complex conceptual variable that demands distinction of motives, not merely distinction of class.

Buyers often use heuristics to assess authenticity or quality, such as comparing price with expectations, examining stitches, or evaluating packaging (Amaral, 2021). Heuristics are quick ways to make decisions when information is limited. Within the normative framework, heuristics can protect consumers to a certain extent, but can also mislead when imitation becomes increasingly similar. Traders and suppliers can increase similarity so that visual heuristics become less effective. When heuristics fail, buyers can experience losses and feelings of being deceived. Experiences of being deceived can change societal attitudes, from tolerance toward rejection. However, attitude change does not always occur directly because buyers can blame themselves or consider losses as shopping risk. Attitudes like this can sustain imitation practices because buyers do not demand accountability. In traditional markets, the claims process is often

weak because transaction evidence is minimal and social relations make people reluctant to conflict. This shows that limitations in recovery mechanisms can strengthen the sustainability of problematic practices. Therefore, normative discussion needs to position heuristics as a cognitive mechanism that explains how information is processed in transactions, while simultaneously explaining how heuristic limitations create space for misleading claims. Societal attitudes toward risk determine whether they will accept heuristic limitations or demand clearer information standards.

Consumer education in the normative sense can be understood as increasing comprehension about rights, claims, and honesty standards in transactions. However, without entering technical proposals, the discussion can emphasize that societal attitudes are often formed from knowledge circulating in communities. Community knowledge can consist of stories, warnings, or trader recommendations. This knowledge can increase caution, but it can also normalize imitation products if dominant stories emphasize price benefits. Within the normative framework, consumer education becomes relevant because it organizes society's ability to distinguish open transactions from misleading transactions. The ability to distinguish will influence tolerance. If society can recognize misleading claims, they tend to reject. If society cannot recognize, they tend to accept. However, consumer education also relates to value orientation. When society views brands as distant issues, legal brand knowledge may not change attitudes. Therefore, discussion needs to position consumer education as a process of forming assessment, not merely adding information. Assessment includes whether honesty is considered important, whether claims are considered fair, and whether transactions are considered just. Thus, societal attitudes can be understood as the result of social learning that can strengthen or weaken demand for imitation products. It is important to understand that an individual's education level is significantly correlated with awareness of the importance of legality and licensing in running competitive micro enterprises (Mardikaningsih & Arifin, 2021).

The trader's position in imitation product practices needs to be read through communication responsibility in transactions (Liandhajani, 2022). Traders are the parties conveying information about goods. Within the normative framework, communication responsibility demands clarity

about goods status, especially when goods display brand markers that can influence buyers' decisions. However, traders also face market pressure to sell, so there are incentives to highlight similarity. The tension between honesty obligations and sales incentives can produce ambiguous communication patterns. Ambiguous patterns give space for buyers to believe according to preference, but this pattern reduces certainty. Certainty is an important element of transaction justice. Societal attitudes toward this communication pattern influence whether ambiguous patterns are allowed or rejected. When society accepts ambiguity as part of bargaining, traders will maintain it. When society judges ambiguity as a form of misleading, traders must clarify. Thus, societal attitudes function as social standards regulating trader communication. This shows that practice change can occur through social standard change, even though this discussion does not establish change steps. The goal is to explain the mechanism, that trader communication is the meeting point between norm and market. When honest communication becomes a valued norm, the market will adjust through reputation and regular customers. In every business relationship, understanding of social contracts and formal agreements becomes fundamental in ensuring trade practices continue to operate on justice principles (Da Silva et al., 2022).

There is a dimension of traditional market reputation related to imitation product circulation. Reputation can be a reason people choose or avoid markets. Within the normative framework, reputation is formed by collective experience about honesty, quality, and price certainty. When a market is perceived as a place for imitation products, buyers seeking original products can avoid, while buyers accepting imitations can continue coming. This segmentation can change market profile, strengthening certain traders' positions and weakening others. Segmentation can also change transaction norms, because prevailing standards follow the dominant buyer group. When permissive buyers dominate, disclosure standards can weaken. When critical buyers dominate, disclosure standards can strengthen. Thus, market reputation and societal attitudes mutually shape through buyer composition. Reputation also influences market relations with outside parties, such as brand owners or supervisory institutions. Although this writing does not present data, normatively bad reputation can trigger enforcement

demands, which then affect small traders. This shows there are collective consequences from individual consumption choices. Societal attitudes permissive toward imitation products can expand circulation, which then affects market reputation and stability. Therefore, normative discussion needs to position reputation as an aggregate result of attitudes and repeated practices, not as a label standing alone. Further, environmental accountability through business ethics, moral responsibility, and legal obligations must become an integral part of market reputation so a sustainable economic ecosystem is created (Darmawan, 2022).

In imitation product transactions, there is an issue of information justice related to knowledge asymmetry (Abid et al., 2022). Traders can know more about goods, but do not always disclose. Buyers can have limited knowledge and depend on price signals and verbal explanations. Within the normative framework, knowledge asymmetry is the main reason why honesty obligations become important. This obligation protects buyers from errors that can be triggered by claims. However, knowledge asymmetry can also be reduced through social habits, for example experienced buyers helping other buyers. Such help can form consumer solidarity, but it can also form normalization when help is directed toward choosing better imitations. Thus, knowledge asymmetry can produce two paths, the protection path and the normalization path. Societal attitudes determine which path is dominant. If society views imitation products as a problem, knowledge will be directed toward avoidance methods. If society views imitation products as a choice, knowledge will be directed toward selecting methods considered safe. This discussion shows that societal attitudes are not merely passive responses, but rather determinants of social learning direction. Therefore, normative study needs to organize the relationship between knowledge asymmetry, information obligations, and consumption norm formation in traditional markets. It is also important to pay attention to legal aspects in house rental agreements as an example of how fair information obligations become a prerequisite for effective transactions (Rizky & Darmawan, 2024).

Buyers' decisions to accept or reject imitation products are often influenced by risk experience. Risks can include goods breaking quickly, quality differences far from expectations, or social shame if caught using

imitations (Tang et al., 2014). Within the normative framework, these risks are read as factors forming preferences, then preferences forming attitudes. However, risks can also be perceived differently among individuals. There are buyers who consider breakdown risk normal because of cheap prices, there are buyers who consider breakdown as deception. There are buyers who consider social risk low because their environment also uses imitations, there are buyers who consider social risk high because their environment views brands as status. This variation in risk perception explains why societal attitudes are heterogeneous. Attitude heterogeneity then influences how traders group goods, for example offering various quality levels. Goods grouping becomes a way for traders to manage demand heterogeneity. At the same time, grouping strengthens normalization because the market provides seemingly rational choices. Thus, risk and risk management become part of the practice sustainability mechanism. Normative discussion can position societal attitudes as a form of risk management, namely how people weigh risks against benefits, then decide. However, when decisions are based on unclear information, risk management becomes weak. This is the reason why claims and disclosure become the center of discussion. In a broader perspective, equitable legal protection including for franchise business operators in the Islamic law view becomes an important instrument to balance risks among business actors (Wibowo et al., 2024).

There is a dimension of social order related to society's acceptance of imitation product practices. Social order here is not merely written rules, but rather shared habits that keep transactions occurring without conflict. Within the normative framework, some segments of society may choose permissive attitudes to maintain order, for example not questioning goods status to avoid market quarrels (Catonini & Vito, 2020). Attitudes like this can maintain social relations, but can also strengthen problematic practices. In traditional markets, open conflict can be considered damaging to harmony and can result in buyers feeling uncomfortable returning to shop. Traders also avoid conflict because reputation is important. Thus, ambiguity becomes a way to maintain order. However, order built on ambiguity has normative costs in the form of weakened honesty standards. When honesty standards weaken, buyers demanding certainty will be marginalized. Thus, there is tension between

social order and consumer protection. Societal attitudes can prioritize social order or information protection. This tension needs to be explained because it influences policy choices and guidance without requiring data. At the conceptual level, this tension helps understand why imitation product practices can persist even though in principle they are questionable. This tension also reflects global governance challenges and domestic social integration often influenced by populist ethno-religious nationalistic currents (Fariz, 2021), as well as the importance of cross-border business competition regulation effectiveness in maintaining a healthy business climate (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). Additionally, legal certainty through bankruptcy and PKPU institutions remains the last fortress in resolving debt disputes arising from economic uncertainty (Dirgantara et al., 2025).

The relationship between imitation products and people's economic access is also often used as social justification. Imitation products are viewed as providing business opportunities for small traders and consumption access for buyers with limited budgets (Blakeney, 2023). Within the normative framework, this justification has persuasive power because it emphasizes short-term welfare. However, this justification does not automatically erase the problems of claim honesty and respect for brands. Economic justification needs to be distinguished from ethical justification. A person can acknowledge traders' economic needs, yet still demand information openness. A person can accept products resembling style, yet reject authenticity claims. Thus, economic justification can be directed toward strengthening transaction ethics, namely acknowledgment of economic needs without compromising information truth. Societal attitudes play a role in determining whether economic justification becomes a reason to ignore norms or becomes a reason to organize practices to be more honest. When society views openness as important, traders can adjust narratives. When society views openness as unnecessary, traders are not driven to change. Therefore, normative discussion must position economic justification as one element forming attitudes, but not an element closing all other considerations.

Discussion also needs to position imitation products as a matter of symbolic legitimacy. Brands are symbols marking origin and reputation. Imitation products imitate this symbol to obtain additional value. Within

the normative framework, symbol imitation raises two problems, namely the problem of symbol ownership and the problem of symbol usage honesty (Ahmed, 2016). Symbol ownership relates to trademark rights, while symbol usage honesty relates to claims to consumers. Societal attitudes can ignore the symbol ownership problem when they do not feel bound by trademark rights norms. However, society tends to be more sensitive to the honesty problem when they feel harmed. This explains why social rejection often emerges after deception experiences, not after doctrinal understanding. Thus, societal attitudes often move from experience, then form local consumption norms. Local consumption norms then influence trader practices. When local norms accept symbol usage as decoration, imitation practices strengthen. When local norms judge symbols must match origin, imitation practices weaken. This mechanism confirms that imitation product discussion needs a bridge between legal norms and social norms. This bridge is societal attitudes that organize what is considered fair and proper in transactions.

The practice of selling imitation products in traditional markets and societal attitudes mutually shape each other through mechanisms of claims, value perception, trust, and normalization. Traders adjust their selling methods based on buyers' demand and tolerance. Buyers adjust their attitudes based on transaction experience, community narratives, and value preferences. Within the normative framework, practice sustainability can be explained when there is a social balance between claim ambiguity and buyer acceptance. This balance can become fragile when widespread deception experiences emerge or when market reputation declines. Critical societal attitudes can force increased information openness, while permissive attitudes can expand the space for ambiguity. Therefore, the problem formulation can be answered by stating that the relationship between practice and attitude operates as a social feedback loop. This loop organizes prevailing honesty standards, organizes claim types considered fair, and organizes the boundary between value agreement and misleading. Thus, normative discussion positions imitation products as a transaction matter involving symbolic value, information ethics, and market social legitimacy, all influenced by societal attitudes as buyers and as community members.

Conclusion

The practice of selling counterfeit products in traditional markets can be understood as a trading mechanism that relies on brand signifiers, value perceptions, and merchant communication during transactions. Public attitudes are not singular but are instead composed of economic, moral, and social considerations that can result in tolerance, ambivalence, or rejection. The link between practices and attitudes is explained through forms of authenticity claims, ranging from open disclosure to implicit claims that create ambiguity. The normalization of practices emerges when repetitive transactions establish habits and when community language and narratives soften the issue of imitation. Personal trust and market reputation function as social regulators that can either strengthen transparency or, conversely, maintain ambiguity for the sake of social order. From a normative perspective, a crucial distinction lies between transactions with mutual awareness and transactions involving deception, as both produce different assessments regarding trade honesty and consumer protection. Thus, the relationship between practices and attitudes operates as a social feedback loop that organizes the standards of transaction fairness in traditional markets.

The implications and suggestions emphasize that the discussion of counterfeit products must position information honesty as the meeting point between consumer protection and trade ethics, without oversimplifying the economic reality of small-scale merchants. A conceptual framework that distinguishes between forms of claims, levels of buyer awareness, and the structure of public attitudes can be used to interpret the boundaries of transaction fairness and the limits of deception. Consumer education needs to be understood as the formation of judgment that prioritizes information transparency, rather than merely adding terminology knowledge. At the level of market governance, reputation and trust must be understood as collective assets that depend on the communication standards of merchants and the habits of buyers in demanding clarity. For the development of legal and socio-legal studies, there is a need to strengthen concepts regarding knowledge asymmetry, the legitimacy of brand symbols, and the social control function of market reputation in shaping compliance with norms. Future research based on written sources could develop a more detailed

taxonomy of public attitudes and organize propositions regarding the relationship between normalization, claim ambiguity, and the formation of standards for transactional justice.

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