

Brand imitation

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Many companies which use branding as their major key for marketing are facing the problem of imitators which makes them lose a possible high profit and potential customers whom will prefer to buy the cheaper alternative even though it is just an imitation. With these points in mind, the research paper will elucidate about the brand imitation, types of brand imitation, how it's affecting the branding companies and the possible solutions for brand imitation. Introduction: Now days the branded companies are in great trouble and crisis because they are not only facing tough competition but also the matter of brand imitation.

Brand imitation is affecting their market and eating up the profits of big branded companies. Through research, the data has been collected that shows new imitated brands exist in the market and making profits from last 30 years. Those products are not exactly same but the imitator tries to make it with slight differences or modifications. “ More than 30 years ago, Levitt (1966) made the point that the majority of so-called “new” products are really innovative imitations, that is products that do not lead to different consumption patterns (Gatignon and Robertson, 1991) but are mere recreations of existing products with minor modifications.” (Alain d’Astous 2001)

The imitators’ biggest strategy is to earn profit by selling the famous brand on the low cost. They try to portray it as an original brand by adopting the same attributes, qualities even the marketing strategies of products i. e. designs, logo, and covering as well as brand name. So the consumers perceive the product as a same original brand on a low cost. “ Brand imitation is a profitable marketing strategy based on the utilization of

similarity (package, design, brand name, advertising, etc.) in order to facilitate the acceptance of a brand by consumers.

Because it resembles the successful (original) brand that it intends to imitate, the brand imitator may be attributed the original brand's properties (quality, performance, reliability, origin, etc.) and such generalization is thought to have a significant impact on brand attitude and purchase (Zaichkowsky, 1995). ” (Alain d’Astous 2001) In brand imitation, the matter has been mostly observed through observations or experiments. And through observations the occurrence of generalization effect is apparent within the boundaries of brand imitation.

The similarity of two products is generally perceived by consumers as a product by same companies. This generalization gives path to imitators. When the qualities and image of a product is not clear in the mind of a consumer then this confusion also lead towards brand imitation. “ In that study, brand confusion was more likely to occur when consumers' product familiarity, Product experience and involvement with the product category were low. Kapferer and Thoenig (1992) found that similarity between brands is more likely to create confusion when attention and product involvement are low.” (Alain d’Astous 2001)

Brand Imitation:

Brand Imitation is the counterfeiting of products or services. Imitation can be used in every aspect of life. From teaching till politics. It’s a further action to scrutinize an object and then reproduce it. “ Imitation is an advanced behavior whereby an individual observes and replicates another's” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imitation>) Several theories were furnished by researchers <https://assignbuster.com/brand-imitation/>

that show that the imitation was also used in different cultures in the past few centuries.

The people used to adopt the beliefs of one culture and replicate it into their culture. The above data proving that the imitation is the general behavior of every human on the earth. “ Recent work in neuroscience has begun to reveal the mechanisms of imitation in the human brain. It seems that there is a system of mirror neurons which are active both when you see another person act and when you do the same thing yourself and these may allow humans to learn by imitation. ” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imitation>)

Types of brand Imitation:

There are different types of brand imitation i. e. Counterfeits or product pirates, knockoffs or clones, design copies or trade dress, creative adaptations, technological leapfrogging, adaptation to another industry.

Counterfeits or product pirates:

A counterfeit is the copy of an object especially used for documents or currency to mislead their contents or foundation. It also imitates the technologies, clothing, trademarks, automobiles etc. Consumer items are also included for example: The CD of Microsoft windows are easily available in the pirated form on very cheap prices.

“ This covers a wide range of consumer items, from outright fakes in the sense that they are non-functional look-alikes” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfeit>)

Knock-off or clones:

Knock-off is the similar product of the original company containing its logo, name and other attributes but not fabricated by the original company which have its own brand name. “ A " knock-off" is a product bearing a trademarked name, logo, brand or other identity that is not manufactured or sold by the company that owns the trademark. ” (http://turkeytravelplanner.com/details/Shopping/knock_offs.html) Now days there are many knock-off items available in the market and consumers are buying them. Like in Turkey, many Puma’s and Lacosta’s shirts sell in the market which are knock-off items. They are not manufactured by original company. “..... suitcase full of shirts bearing labels and logos such as Lacoste or Puma, or a pushcart with athletic shoes bearing Adidas and Nike logos, chances are that these are not goods made by those manufacturers. They're knock-offs. ” (http://turkeytravelplanner.com/details/Shopping/knock_offs.html)

Mostly, Perfumes, hand bags, cigars, watches and other consumer items, are making by the knock-off companies and also the other products which are high profitable items. Design Copies or trade dress: Trade dress is the protection of a design and wrapping against the other companies to not to used by them. The law registered the trademark to the company so that the company should be distinguishing from other companies. “ Trade dress refers to characteristics of the visual appearance of a product or its packaging that may be registered and protected from being used by competitors in the manner of a trademark.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_dress

To protect the trade dress the companies should fulfill two basic requirements. I. e. the design and packing should be different from other products so that it can be easily recognized by the customers. And the second requirement is that the trade dress should be non-functional. “ To be nonfunctional, it cannot affect a product's cost, quality, or a manufacturer's ability to effectively compete in a non-reputable way. ” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_dress) Technology leapfrogging:

With the passage of time the technologies are becoming so fast that after every one or two weeks the new technologies are coming and the previous technologies are quickly fading away. The life of technologies has become so short. It's because of companies are trying to leapfrog each other and want to catch the profits. Every one is confused between innovator and imitator. The innovator innovates the product and then the imitators copied it and sell the product in the market with little modifications. How the brand imitation is affecting the branding companies:

With the emerging trend of imitation, the branded companies are facing so many difficulties. These companies are trying to stop imitation and protect their revenues. Some researchers say that the competition in a market place brings innovation and imitation also take place which makes the market more efficient and effective. “ Competition is the heart of a healthy marketplace. When imitation is competition then the market may become more efficient (Schnaars 1994)” (<http://mint.mcmaster.ca/nbc/wilke.htm>)

The companies are highly affected by brand imitation.

So many imitators are there in the market that no one can recognize them. Imitators are doing their business by producing the similar product of <https://assignbuster.com/brand-imitation/>

branded company by making little changes in the product. The logo packaging, trade name every thing is similar to the original brand. Then they sell the product in the market and those products are available at cheap shops. Because of low prices the consumer are buying the products with the perception that the product is original. This imitation is playing with the branded companies and eating up their revenues.

Every big company like Nike, Puma, Chanel, Estee lauder, Ford etc are facing these problems. The products are easily selling in the market with the same name, logo etc. “ A guy on Istanbul's Galata Bridge with a suitcase full of shirts bearing labels and logos such as Lacoste or Puma, or a pushcart with athletic shoes bearing Adidas and Nike logos, chances are that these are not goods made by those manufacturers. They're knock-offs. ” (http://turkeytravelplanner.com/details/Shopping/knock_offs.html) The consumers are confused between innovator and imitator.

The consumer are buying the products with the thinking in mind that certain product is same from the original company. But the consumers are not fully informed about the copies of the product easily available in the market at cheap prices. Because of this problem the manufactures are undergoing a tough situation which is affecting their brand name. “ As a result, not only may national brand manufacturers suffer loss of sales, but their brand equity may be irreparably damaged by changing consumers' attitudes about the uniqueness of the national brand (Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996).

Therefore all national brand managers are extremely concerned about imitation of their brands. ” (Colleen Collins-Dodd et al 1999) The possible solutions for brand imitation: The business press and other officials are trying <https://assignbuster.com/brand-imitation/>

to come up with reasonable solutions for brand imitation. They asked manufactures to take legal step against these companies. As those companies are using their trade names. And illegally sell the product in the market but the reason which is restricting them is that the retailers are also engaged in these activities.

And they take action against those retailers the companies would loss the space on the shelf of the stores. “ Anecdotal evidence in theacademicliterature and business press suggests that manufacturers will take legal action against each other when they believe their trademarks or trade dress has been infringed upon, but they are reluctant to take legal action when retailers undertake the same copycat activity (Kapferer, 1995b; Hollinger, 1997). ” (Colleen Collins-Dodd et al 1999) Brand imitation has a long history. Imitators are catching up the other companies revenues from pass few years.

“ In fact, some of the first trademark infringement cases were brought to the courts in the early 1800s (Zaichkowsky, 1995). ” (Colleen Collins-Dodd et al 1999) The biggest problem of this brand imitation is that the consumers are confusing about the original product. The consumers are not fully informed or aware about the product. They are buying the similar product with the perception in a mind that it’s a same brand or product from original company. And the biggest pleasure for the consumers is that they are getting the similar product in lower price.

“ Since most imitations are priced lower than the original brands, consumers are willing to buy the lower priced imitation, which may offer greater value if the product is as good as the national brand it imitates. ” (Colleen Collins-

Dodd et al 1999) To solve the problem the manufactures have to fully aware the consumers about the products. So the consumer can easily distinguish between innovator and imitator. Conclusion: Few years back the Americans imitated the Japanese products. At that time Japanese are the biggest imitators. That led Japanese to towards innovators. Now the Japanese are using both the strategies.

The Americans also imitated the strategies process and business planning of Japanese firms. But insubstantial things are not easier to copy as compared to products. " The Japanese began conquering international markets by copying American products and selling the results at lower prices. Later, many Japanese firms switched from being product imitators to becoming product innovators. "

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