

# Why Do People Buy Dupe Cosmetics?

## A Study Of Values Behind Dupes Purchase In Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

One of the activities that is popular when purchasing a product is counterfeiting: purchasing replicas of original products which sometimes can manipulate consumers. However, there is another phenomenon called non-deceptive counterfeiting where consumers consciously consume counterfeits (Vida, 2007). This is because society often buys counterfeits to fulfill their functional needs with lower-priced products. In regard to this, researchers aim to dig deeper insights about the current trend in the cosmetics industry: dupes, which are knockoff products that resulted from duplicating an authentic product, but with an entirely different brand identity. (Rosenbaum et al., 2016). The researchers seek to investigate the products of Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, and Emina Glossy Stain as the dupes of Dior Lip Tint, and consumers' values while purchasing them. The research design used is case study using the method of Focus Group Discussion. This research aims to complete the existing research gaps from the previous studies regarding counterfeits and dig deeper insight specifically about this dupe phenomenon. The result of this research will then be analyzed and interpreted using the coding method with thematic analysis.

**Keywords:** Dupe, Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, Emina Glossy Stain, Consumer Values

### SARI PATI

*Salah satu aktivitas yang semakin populer saat membeli barang adalah menggunakan barang counterfeits, yaitu sebutan untuk produk replika dari produk asli dan terkadang dapat memanipulasi konsumen. Namun, terdapat fenomena lain dimana konsumen secara sadar mengonsumsi barang counterfeits bernama non-deceptive counterfeiting (Vida, 2007). Seringkali, masyarakat mencari barang counterfeits karena dapat memenuhi kebutuhan fungsional dengan harga murah. Terkait dengan counterfeiting, peneliti ingin menggali informasi lebih dalam mengenai tren di industri kosmetik yaitu penggunaan dupe atau singkatan dari duplicates dimana barang dupe merupakan barang knockoff hasil duplikat barang otentik namun dengan brand identity yang berbeda (Rosenbaum, et al., 2016). Dalam penelitian ini, penulis ingin meneliti kasus Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, dan Emina Glossy Stain sebagai dupe dari Dior Lip Tint dan apa nilai konsumen dalam membeli produk tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan desain riset studi kasus dengan metode Focus Group Discussion. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melengkapi research gap yang ada dari penelitian terdahulu mengenai counterfeits dan menggali lebih dalam mengenai fenomena dupes secara spesifik. Hasil penelitian kemudian akan dianalisis dan diinterpretasi menggunakan coding method dengan thematic analysis.*

**Kata Kunci:** Dupe, Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, Emina Glossy Stain, Consumer Values



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## INTRODUCTION

In purchasing a product, one of the activities that are well-known among consumers is the usage of inauthentic products. Inauthentic product itself is the result of an action where a company releases manipulative products and use the design elements belonged to another company (Rosenbaum et al., 2016). The brand that produces the inauthentic products has a direction which is to follow a leader brand or that the products made were not original. One of the most common terms used in purchasing an inauthentic product is counterfeit where it is a name for products that are replicas of original products.

The counterfeit phenomenon itself has been around for some time. One example can be found in China in 2017 (China Daily, 2017) where according to some local online businessmen, the demand for imported or international goods is tremendous, hence giving them an opportunity to penetrate the market by selling counterfeited goods that are similar to the original imported ones. Most of the customers who purchased the counterfeits didn't really mind the unoriginality of the products since they have a very significant similarity, almost indistinguishable and with a relatively lower price. Another Chinese customer claimed that she had low intention of purchasing an original and expensive luxury product as they're only expensive because of the brand value alone, not because of the utility value that gives her a particular benefit. Therefore, for products like fashion, she would rather buy the duplicated version online with a good quality and much lower price.

Aside from the phenomenon that views how consumers can be manipulated into buying a counterfeited product instead of the original one, there is another phenomenon where consumers consciously and intentionally purchase counterfeited goods that is called non-

deceptive counterfeiting (Vida, 2007) or an act of falsification that is not manipulative. There are underlying motives behind customers' purchase of counterfeits, one of them being a financial factor. People who are financially less fortunate have a higher tendency to buy products with a lower price such as private brands instead of imported or international brands. The very same people sometimes would even be willing to purchase fake goods (Agarwal, S., & Panwar, S., 2016). In this case, people are faced with the fact that trends are ever-changing, requiring them to be updated with the current trends and wiping out their wallets. As a result, they can make themselves look stylish and up-to-date with a low budget by wearing counterfeits instead.

In relation to counterfeiting, one of the popular trends often used among consumers is the use of dupes or short for duplicates which means knockoff products resulted from duplicating authentic goods but with a different brand identity (Rosenbaum et al., 2016). However, many preceding research have not explained about the dupes phenomenon in particular and still focusing mainly on counterfeits which often gives a negative view since they equal to fake and illegal products. Hence, researchers seek to dig deeper about the usage of dupes especially in an industry where the word 'dupe' itself is most popular, that is the cosmetic industry.

According to Data Statista in 2022, the cosmetic global usage trend experienced an increase, reaching 16% and was the highest number compared to the previous years. In Indonesia alone, the trend for beauty product usage also had an increase to about 5,59% in 2020 and continued to go up every year. This indicates that people's interest in beauty products keeps increasing as time passes by. However, with the limited access to imported or international brands of beauty products in terms of location as well as price, it gives local brands an opportunity to get their own portion of the

market share. They made a move by saying that in order to beautify yourself, people don't have to buy expensive imported products and purchase more affordable local products instead, with a good quality but a much lower price.

Another survey from Databoks (2022) also stated that consumers prefer to use local products instead of imported ones in the cosmetic category with a portion of 54% of the 500 respondents. This shows that people are becoming more and more interested in using local products from many aspects, instead of using imported products. From this phenomenal increase in local product interest, it is inevitable that the trend of 'dupe' is also increasing in society, meaning that they prefer to buy local products as a duplicated version of international products with a much lower price.

The term 'dupe' itself also seems to be glorified in a way, which can be seen from social media as it is applied as a marketing strategy where influencers would often do a product review and use the term dupe as a clickbait to gain people's attention by saying how dupes are the affordable version of luxury products. Thus, the majority of consumers seek dupe products of a similar quality with the luxury ones but with a cheaper price and a whole different brand identity, especially local products.

In this research, authors would like to take the chance to do a single-case study design by choosing the focus on the usage of cosmetic dupes in Indonesia. For the products, the researchers chose three brands that are frequently called the dupes of an international brand, Dior. The three brands are **Reveline** Stain Plump Tint, **Somethinc** Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, and **Emina** Glossy Stain. The final decision to choose these brands began from a problem identification process from social media reviews that the three brands were often called the dupes of one of Dior's product, a lip tint. In the reviews

done by some influencers, most of them did a comparison between Somethinc, Reveline, and Emina with Dior Lip Tint and concluded their reviews by claiming that the three products mentioned before are the dupes of Dior with a competing and similar quality of the original product. Instead of being labelled as fakes that imitate Dior, the three products received a tremendous attention instead by offering a price almost ten times cheaper than the luxury brand, Dior.

From the previously elaborated phenomenon, some questions arose such as the underlying values behind Indonesian consumers' usage of dupe products, which in this case is the dupes of Dior Lip Tint.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Dupe

Cosmetic "dupe" or imitation cosmetics are alternative cosmetic products that are manufactured by lower cost brand, which its products have similar performance and quality with high-end brands' products (Primeaux, Samantha., 2018). One of the characteristics of imitation cosmetics is having unique details from a high-end product, for example having similar colors, textures, or formulas. An example of makeup dupes that are in the market is the "Ultra Eye Contour - Light & Shade" from Makeup Revolution, which is an imitation of Kat Von D's "Shade Light + Eye Contour Palette". This Makeup Revolution's product can be seen as an imitation because other than having the same color choices in its palette, this product costs \$14—relatively  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Kat Von D's palette which costs \$55.

Not only in the United States, this imitation makeup trend also enters Asia, including South Korea. There, more local brands are starting to launch high-end imitation products starting from cosmetics to skin care. One of the brands in South Korea that launched an imitation product

is Nature Republic. This brand launched a blush product named “Shine Blossom Blusher” which claimed to be the imitation of Benefit’s “Dandelion Ultra Plush”. The ratio of the price difference between the two products is almost 1:6, where Nature Republic’s cost KRW 6,900 while Benefit’s at KRW 42,000.

### **Motivational Factors that Drive Imitation Product Usage**

In purchasing imitation products, consumers were driven by several factors that make them decide to purchase the products. According to Tang et al (2014) in *Understanding Counterfeit Consumption*, there are 9 motivational factors that drive consumers in Hong Kong purchase imitation counterfeit products. Researchers will adopt the “counterfeit” terminology from consumers’ perspective in general where consumers don’t differentiate between imitation, counterfeiting, and piracy. They then use “counterfeit” to define all products that violate intellectual property rights in general (Hoe et al., 2003). Also, counterfeit consumption is focused only on non-deceptive consumption which happens when consumers consciously purchase counterfeits.

Counterfeit consumption is divided into 15 product categories: computer software; audio/visual media; handbags; clothing/shoes; books; daily commodities; accessories; toys; food; hand watches; electronics; cosmetics; eyeglasses; medicine; music instruments. Based on the codings from previous product categories, the researchers found motivational factors that drive counterfeit consumption: utility, perceived risks, social influence, confusion, ethical perceptions, cultural influence, local interests, habits, and desire for exploration (Tang et al, 2014).

### **Consumer Values that Drive Imitation Product Usage**

Consumers have their own values while using imitation products. Based on findings by Singh

& Trott (2019) in *Non-Deceptive Deliberate Purchase of Brand Lookalikes: a BOP Customer Value Perspective*, several values were found of BOP customers while purchasing counterfeit products. Consumer value itself is defined as something that drives consumers to do a selection or maintenance to achieve a goal while simultaneously regulating methods and behavior done to achieve that very same goal (Vinson et al, 1977). Based on the findings, three different themes were found as values of BOP customers while buying counterfeits. First is where customers evaluate the price of the counterfeits and the original as well as the cost-benefit analysis of both products, which was then concluded that counterfeits are deemed to be more worth to buy. Second theme is status symbol where customers use counterfeits to boost their social status by making themselves look like they are wearing high-end brands to give the impression as if they come from a high social class. Third theme is value for money where it is just in the nature of BOP consumers to purchase anything at a low price since they see little to no risk in purchasing low-price products, hence preferring counterfeits to get the job done.

### **METHODS**

This research uses case study as the research design, which is the method to identify a case bound by time or place that can explain a problem researched (Creswell et al., 2007). The case for this research is focused on the usage of imitation cosmetics. The type of case study used here is single-case study where researchers focus on a case that represents an issue. In this research, the case is the usage of makeup dupes in Indonesia and the products chosen to represent the dupes are Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, and Emina Glossy Stain. As for coding, the researchers use grounded theory method that includes Open, Axial, and Selective Coding (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Researchers collected both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected through literature reviews from academic journals and articles. Researchers also conducted netnography that studies culture or communities through communications on the internet (Kozinets, 2002) where for this case, the researchers gathered online discussions between consumers about dupes of Dior Lip Tint which are Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, and Emina Glossy Stain. While primary data was collected with a qualitative method through Focus Groups containing participants with their profiling attached below. These focus groups have 8-10 participants who met offline with a moderator to focus and discuss the research topic (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). The researchers used Focus Groups to push dynamic interactions between participants in order to gain more insights or views compared to in-depth interviews.

To recruit the informants, researchers used non-probability sampling as the technique and the informants were chosen with judgmental sampling method where they were selected with the criteria which the researchers had decided on beforehand (McDaniel & Gates., 2020). The sample size for Focus Groups is 2 groups which are divided by college students and employees. Each group will have 5 informants. After recruiting informants that were fitting with the criteria, focus groups were conducted.

After conducting Focus Groups, transcribing was done to help researchers process data easily before analyzing it. Then, the data was analyzed with the inductive approach where researchers derive values in purchasing imitation products by consumers based on data analysis.

The data was then analyzed with thematic analysis, which is a method to develop, analyze, and interpret patterns in a qualitative data that involves data coding to develop themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretically, thematic analysis is more flexible as it gives instructions, rather than strict rules to follow when processing data. In thematic analysis, researchers also go through phases instead of steps as researchers can move dynamically from start to end process.

**RESULTS**

In the process of searching for codes as the research uses thematic analysis, a total of three themes and 17 codes were found. In classifying the codes, the researchers divided the themes into three parts; first is Definition, containing how informants define imitation products. The second theme is Assessment, which contains informants’ assessment of imitation products, and the last theme is Usage Values containing value factors that drive the informants to purchase imitation products.

**Theme 1: *Definition of Imitation Products***

To make sure that the informants have fully

**Table 1. Informants Profile Criteria**

Category	Criteria	Description
Age	17-28 years old	17-22 y.o. (college students) 23-28 y.o. (employees)
Gender	Female	Cosmetics are generally used by females.
Domicile	Indonesia	-
Behavior	An active user of social media and the product/s of: Reveline Stain Plump Tint, Something Umbrella Lip Totem Tint, and Emina Glossy Stain.	TikTok, Instagram, Twitter

grasped the concept of imitation products, the researchers asked a few questions regarding their opinion on the said products and which ones can be called dupes and which ones cannot. From here, some boundaries are set by the informants claiming that dupes or imitation products are the alternatives of high-end products that offer a more affordable price.

“I think a dupe is something that is awfully similar (to high end products) but it’s affordable.. that’s what I think.” (Female, 28)

They also stated that imitation products have their own brand identity but with a similar formula as the high-end ones while also using the high-end brands’ equity to attract customers’ attention or as a clickbait. “Uhm.. I mean there’s an original version of this (imitation product), but in terms of formula and feels it’s very similar to the famous brand (high end products). So there goes the clickbait!” (Female, 23). According to informants’ understanding of imitation products, it aligns with the definition by Rosenbaum et al (2016) that imitation product is a result of duplicating an authentic product (high end) but using a different brand identity.

### ***Theme 2: Assessment of Imitation Products***

While using the imitation of Dior Lip Tint there are some advantages and disadvantages stated by the informants. They claimed that these imitation products have a strong and long-lasting stain. “Yes it lasts long, I start wearing my make up at 7 a.m. and it still lasts up till 12 p.m..” (Female, 28). However, it is only suitable for daily use since the products do not provide a long-lasting enough stain for certain activities such as the ones that require eating, especially greasy food.

“I think it depends on the occasion.. if I use it to eat a lot or something like that I wouldn’t wear the product because it doesn’t last very long if I use it for eating.” (Female, 23)

According to the informants’ usage, they claim that the imitation of Dior has a significant similarity with the original Dior Lip Tint product from many aspects such as the slightly different color, to the cooling sensation when applied to the lips. “The formula and the feeling (are the same). Both are said to have the cooling mint sensation..” (Female, 24). However, there are some features or qualities that are different or cannot be found as the imitation products, as the informants said, are still considered to be in the ‘dupe’ category.

“But the one with the most similar result is Ombrella. \*holds Somethinc Ombrella Lip Totem Tint\* In terms of texture, taste, and stain, Dior is still superior, darling. It’s (imitation product) still a dupe anyway.” (Female, 28)

After using imitation products, informants claimed to be quite pleased in purchasing them as the quality and benefits lived up to their expectations. They are satisfied with imitation products, knowing well that those products are called the ‘dupes’ of Dior Lip Tint, as aligned with the findings by Rosenbaum et al (2016). “The brand that I think gives me the best feeling is Somethinc. So I think I’m very satisfied with this one Somethinc product. Not to mention that with its price level, I think the quality it offers is quite good.” (Female, 24). Furthermore, since the informants are satisfied with purchasing imitation products, a repurchase intention emerged.

“I’m content with the quality (it offers) so I feel like buying it again, because it just suits me.” (Female. 20)

Most of the informants claimed that they will keep on purchasing imitation products in the future as an alternative option, since in terms of quality and price level, it gives them yet another reason to keep purchasing imitation products



instead of the high-end ones. On the one hand, some hoped that imitation products would continue to develop their qualities from many aspects to offer them more comfort, as well as for more local brands to provide imitation version of high-end products that come with affordable price. “Just keep on improving their quality, innovation, and maybe the choice of shades and packaging I guess.. But hopefully they can improve their formula so that it’s more comfortable to the lip.” (Female, 22). “I hope there would be more options of dupes from local brands.” (Female, 22). On the other hand, some informants claimed that the use of ‘dupes’ is getting more and more overhyped, so they prefer to see an ‘inspired by’ promotional slogan and use a self-made or original formula instead,

“I prefer them (imitation products) to have their own formulation, if they keep using dupes this, dupes that, ugh... I think it’s very unoriginal!” (Female, 28).

“Or maybe use ‘inspired by’ instead. I think it’s better than using the word dupes.” (Female, 21).

This shows that the informants are getting immune to online reviews, claiming that imitation products are sometimes too easy to be called ‘dupes’. “Well back then, yes (it was more acceptable). But now when people say it’s the dupe of this or it’s the dupe of that, I don’t think that works anymore as it used to...” (Female, 23).

### **Theme 3: Usage Values in imitation**

#### **1) Utility**

According to the informants, imitation products are used for daily activities such as going to campus for college students, hanging out with social circles, as well as going to work for employees. “I usually wear it for daily activities like going to the campus and hanging out.” (Female, 22). This indicates that they purchase imitation products mainly to fulfill their

functional needs and not for their social status. This aligns with the findings by Rosenbaum et al (2016) where the usage of imitation products is a response of unfulfilled functional needs, which in this case is a lip tint product that can be used daily with an affordable price.

“That’s what I think though, it’s better to buy the dupes for daily use, don’t you think..” (Female, 21).

#### **2) Risk Perceptions**

When it comes to imitation products, informants feel like with the price it offers, it already gives an adequate quality, “Quality comes at a price.” (Female, 21), and that it’s reasonable if imitation products can’t beat the original high-end ones, which is Dior Lip Tint.

“Uh expectations... Well, the quality can’t have been as good as Dior I think cause Dior is more pigmented, but even if this (imitation product) isn’t more pigmented it’s fine, as long as they’re similar, it’s acceptable.” (Female, 20).

Most of the informants said that in using an imitation product, they set their expectations as low as they can, meaning that they would be able to accept the disadvantages of the product since it offers a very cheap price. “From the price to formula, it’s different and so on. I mean it’s very reasonable if it’s cheap and can’t deliver (qualities) that well.” (Female, 23). They tend to tolerate it even if imitation products that cost ten times less than the high-end version cannot provide such excellent qualities, and they will still use them with the fact that quality comes at a price in mind.

“We don’t put any expectations or anything like that, but if the result is satisfying then we’ll use it.” (Female, 26)

Based on informants’ insights, the consequence or risk that emerges from purchasing imitation

products is not something of a big issue. When asked about the risks such as unfitting formula or choice of product shade (color) after purchase, they tend to tolerate it, "I think it's an acceptable risk." (Female, 23). An informant even stated that if a lip tint product that she uses makes her lips dry, she could do something to make it work so it is not a significant problem.

"...or I can find something to make it work, maybe like when my lips are dry I usually wear a lip oil." (Female, 26)

### 3) Social Influence

For the consumers, Dior's cosmetics symbolize prestige. Other than the fact that it costs a fortune, has an eminent brand equity, and a high perceived quality, the majority of social environment that surrounds the consumers is a part of high-end cosmetic users. Therefore, when informants find themselves in a situation where they can look like they are wearing a Dior product among their social environment, it boosts their confidence. "I think it makes me feel more confident... To wear Dior's dupe in real life is making me feel like I'm wearing a real Dior." (Female, 22). Another finding shows an informant lying to her social circle that she wears a Dior Lip Tint while actually wearing Somethinc Umbrella Lip Totem Tint which is the imitation product version. Her friends believed her since they know that she does, indeed, own a Dior Lip Tint product. Not only that, this informant who also works as a makeup artist, did the same thing to her clients saying that the product applied to the said client is Dior Lip Tint, while it is in fact the imitation version. All of this was done in order to gain her client's trust and build her pride.

"Let's say I own one (Dior Lip Tint), then you just buy the dupe version next, if people ask you what you're wearing (as a lip product), just say it's Dior. \*laughs\*", "That's the benefit for me.. can you call it

a benefit? Like I do people's makeup and they see for themselves that I indeed own a Dior, while the product that I actually apply to them is the dupe instead.." (Female, 28)

In this case, the lies that were told by the informant was something against the norm, doing so in order to gain a social benefit. By owning only one Dior Lip Tint, the informant feels more secure and at ease to purchase imitation products because her social environment already knows that she has the original high-end product, Dior.

### 4) Ethical Perceptions

While wearing the imitation product of Dior Lip Tint, informants give justifications to their action in doing so and why it is considered reasonable. According to their answers, imitation cosmetic products are not visible to the naked eye, different when compared to using other imitation products for example in the fashion industry where they deem imitations are pure acts of plagiarism.

"Maybe a little scary (to use imitation fashion products) because it's usually more visible, more noticeable whether it's a fake or not." (Female, 23)

This also aligns with finding by Horen & Pieters (2012) which states that from two types of imitation that are feature and theme imitation, the theme imitation is deemed fairer and more acceptable as this imitation type does not utilize the elements of identity from the leader brand it copies. Moreover, informants have little to no willingness at all in purchasing an imitation fashion product since the element of design that can be found in fashion products is more visible and can be easily judged whether it follows a famous leader brand or not. Different from imitation cosmetic products, they claim that in terms of cosmetic, it is not easy to identify an originality of a product when applied to the face.



“Uhm, I think I prefer to buy makeup dupes instead of those in fashion. Because like in fashion, it’s different I think... If it’s makeup, it’s like it’s stuck in our face and people won’t find out (whether it’s a dupe or an original one).” (Female, 21).

Some other informants also agreed that people will more easily identify an imitation product in the fashion realm. “Uhm, I think it’s more like invisible when I wear dupes (cosmetic), while in fashion it’s something that we put on and that it’s more well-known to the public.” (Female, 23). The informants claimed that in wearing an imitation cosmetic product, it does not show one’s social status unlike in the fashion industry, hence imitation products in the cosmetic industry are more preferable to use.

“And maybe if it’s fashion it’s more like representing one’s wealth and status, like a reputation.”, “ So if we get caught wearing something similar to the high-end but it’s from a different brand, I think people will be like ‘how could you wear a fake..’ something like that.” (Female, 23)

##### 5) Local Interests

The interest in wearing imitation cosmetic products is also driven by consumers’ pride towards local brands as they feel sentimental when seeing the development of Indonesian cosmetic industry, that is now capable of producing high quality cosmetic products.

“Other than the fact that dupes are cheaper alternatives for college students, I think it’s because it’s from a local brand as well. I feel a sense of proud like, wow... A local brand can create this kind of dupe with a good quality.” (Female, 22).

The emergence of more local brands also provides more options for consumers with products of good quality. “Now local brands are

improving and have become quite good, back then there used to be only like a few local brand options.” (Female, 28). Consumers’ love for local brands also aligns with the finding by Tang et al (2014) where the consumers from the article mentioned that they prefer to buy imitation products to support the local business. In the current research, informants have also shown to have more interest in purchasing imitation products by local brands as they have a sense of pride in doing so.

Moreover, the choice of product shade/color in imitation products made by local brands offer a more adapted undertone version, or more customized to match the skintones of Indonesian consumers. Unlike products from the United States or South Korea where the majority of people have pink undertones while the majority of Indonesian people have yellowish warm undertones, so consumers have higher willingness to buy local imitation products as they have been tailored to match Indonesian users’ characteristics.

“Like the range of shades is more suitable to Indonesians, while it’s quite hard to find warm brown (*sawo matang*) shades abroad, like for example with Korean products, it’s very hard to find a matching lip shade (to the skintone).” (Female, 23).

##### 6) Habits

Aside from other factors, informants wear imitation cosmetic products because it has become a habit for them. This is because when they need a cosmetic product and find out that there is a new product released by a popular high-end brand, they will tend to immediately look for the imitation version instead. This habit was formed as they feel that high-end products have a guaranteed quality so they will try to find the imitation with a more affordable price. “Yes, if I want to buy Dior’s dupes then I type out ‘lip tints similar to Dior.’” (Female, 22).

Other than the habit to immediately look for imitations while in search for cosmetic products, consumers also showed to have willingness to purchase imitation products in another category. For example, an informant stated that she was looking for a local brand that produces a similar pair of shoes by Dr.Martens because she felt that Dr.Martens' shoes are too pricey. Not only for fashion, they also showed interest in purchasing fragrance dupes.

“I think maybe shoes, since I can't afford to buy the actual Doc Mart \*laughs\* their shoes are always of good quality but it's too pricey for me, like it costs millions, so I usually look for the local brand version of it.” (Female, 21). “Like if the smell is similar to a high-end fragrance brand, and there's a local version of it, I think it won't be bad for a daily use too.” (Female, 21).

### 7) Desire for Exploration

Another reason the informants use imitation products is because of their curiosity towards the quality of a high-end product, which then drives them to explore the imitation version of it.

“Actually, it's more like curiosity I guess... Let's say like we know Dior of course, how big the name is, so it makes me curious to know what the affordable version is like. That's how it is for me, but I still had no idea what kind of feeling the original product would give me though...” (Female, 23).

They argued that using imitation products is based on a sense of curiosity, so they tried the product for the sake of experience, “I was simply curious, just for the experience I think.” (Female, 23). Some informants also claimed to have tried the product because of the immense online reviews saying ‘dupes’ here and there, which they thought was clickbaiting.

“Because when people do a normal review then it becomes too common, but when they said it's the dupe of Dior maybe people would be more willing to buy it.” (Female, 23)

### 8) Price Sensitivity

Another factor that influences the informants to purchase imitation cosmetics is because of the price level. This research found that consumers are still relying on price discounts when purchasing products. This explains that consumers still have a high price sensitivity.

“If I see that there's a discount at Guardian, then I'll just use that one (the discounted one).” (Female, 21).

“Well because I need it (lip tint) and it costs way cheaper.” (Female, 23).

Having a discounted price also benefits the consumers as they can save money. Not only that, the informants also showed a high willingness to always pay products at lower prices, although they know the quality that comes with its low price point (Lichtenstein et al., 1990). This also shows that consumers also buy imitation products for its functionality.

### 9) Dupe as Alternative

Imitation cosmetics are treated as an alternative to high end products since they are more affordable. As an alternative, consumers use them for daily usage as the products have similarities with high end products. So, these products can fulfil the needs of those who want to try Dior Lip Tint, but have limitations to get it—including financial limitations.

“Yes, it's a great alternative for daily use since price-wise, it's pretty competitive. So price-wise, it's (dupe) okay and the quality is not bad compared to high-end products.. So it's a great alternative.” (Female, 21).

### 10) Added Value

This research finds that products labelled with 'Dior Dupe' can give better first impressions and attract informants to buy imitation cosmetics. Informants think that this labelling is a plus point for their evaluation of Dior imitation products in general. This behavior resulted from Dior's high brand equity, so products that label themselves with an imitation of this big brand can raise consumer's curiosity and willingness to purchase as they are already familiar with Dior. Thus, instead of purchasing a product with no name, they prefer something that is already more familiar—in this case, products labelled with or known as 'Dior Dupe'.

"Well, it's more of a curiosity. Like we know how big Dior is, so of course, we would like to try an affordable version of it. I think I'm like that.. But I don't know how the real thing feels like.." (Female, 23).

### 11) Maximum Usage

Consumers chose to purchase imitation cosmetics since they can use them daily without needing to save it so the product won't finish quickly. Compared to Dior, consumers prefer to use high-end products that are more premium for special occasions that require them to display their image. So, for daily usage, they prefer something cheaper that they can reapply anytime without feeling bad or worried because they can maximize its usage and repurchase it again after it finishes. While for high end products, they prefer to stretch its usage because they spent a big amount of money for it and don't want it to finish quickly.

"I now understand why I buy dupes.. It's because I love my high-end ones and I don't want them to run out soon..." (Female, 28)

### 12) Internet Influence as Purchase Driver

All informants are active social media users

like Youtube, TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram. As a social media user, they follow influencers and place a really high trust on their reviews, including the ones about imitation cosmetics. This behavior is influenced by e-WOM or Electronic Word of Mouth where it's defined as positive or negative comments about a product or service that can be accessed on the internet (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). This access to information on the internet then influences consumers' decision making when making purchase (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sin et al., 2012)—just like how these informants buy imitation cosmetics after it was reviewed by their favourite social media influencers.

"I use Reveline lip tints, but I don't remember which one.. But I saw that one review from the Youtuber Liv Junkie saying that it was good. Usually, whatever she reviews looks good on me, so every time she reviews a product, I get it hehehe." (Female, 23)

## DISCUSSION

After doing a set of thematic analysis phases, researchers found that consumers have varying values in purchasing imitation products. The current research has found 12 values behind customers' imitation products usage which are Utility, Risk Perceptions, Social Influence, Ethical Perceptions, Local Interests, Habits, Desire for Exploration, Price Sensitivity, Alternative, Added Value, Maximum Usage, dan Internet Influence as Purchase Driver.

Based on the results of this study, researchers derived a new definition dupe cosmetics. According to a preceding researcher, Samantha Primeaux (2018), dupe cosmetic is defined as an alternative cosmetic that is produced by a lower-end brand where the product has a similar quality as the high-end one. However, in the current study, researchers propose a new definition of cosmetic dupes. Researchers define cosmetic

dupes as alternative cosmetic products with a similar color as the one produced by a high-end brand but with a lower price, accessible through non-premium stores such as drugstore and mini markets, as well as having its own brand identity including image, packaging, and brand name. In other words, the element of similarity in a dupe cosmetic product is only in terms of color or shade of the product which functions to provide quality and finishing result on the lips to be like the high-end products. Apart from that, dupe cosmetics have characteristics and elements of identity that are completely different from the high-end version of the products.

Research showed that consumers who purchased imitation products have a very high product acceptance as they do not put much expectation in buying them because of the low price level. This makes it easier for the consumers to accept the products' flaws since they feel like the adequate product quality lives up to their expectations. Prestige symbol is also one of the factors that drive informants to buy imitation products as it can boost their confidence in their social environment. Consumers also justified their usage of imitations because the final result after applying imitation cosmetic products cannot be easily seen with the naked eye, unlike imitation fashion products that can be visible and easily judged from the design elements used. Another reason they buy imitation is also because of their habit in looking for imitations whenever they need a high-end product that costs a fortune. Some informants also claimed that they have a certain curiosity towards the notion of dupes among their social environment that encourages them to purchase imitation products in the end, to decide whether an imitation product deserves to be called a dupe or not.

It was shown that price plays quite a big role in the usage of imitation products. Imitations have a relatively lower price, so it makes them

interested to use it for daily occasions. A few informants said that they prefer to buy the imitation of products with good quality at an affordable price thus allowing them to use the product freely without having to retrench the usage as they usually do with high-end products so the product will last longer. Hence, imitation cosmetic products are more suitable to be used for daily activities. These imitation products can also be alternatives for consumers who are curious to try high-end products but have financial limitations. With imitations having a similar product performance as the high-end ones, they feel like their needs can be fulfilled especially from the functional aspect which is daily usage. Apart from functional benefit, imitation cosmetic products are also superior in terms of cost-benefit analysis compared to high-end products as the usage period of imitations does not need to be stretched and can always be repurchased whenever it runs out.

From the value aspect, research showed that consumers are keen on products labeled as imitation instead of non-imitation ones that only represent itself as a mere original local product. Having an imitation label gives a product an added value, according to the informants, and they would love to keep purchasing products that associate themselves with high-end products' characteristics. Another important factor that drives the purchase of dupes is electronic word of mouth or e-WOM that can be seen on social media. Online reviews play a huge role in making consumers more attracted to buy these imitation products as they recommend alternatives for those who wish to buy high-end products but with an affordable price.

#### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION**

Based on the findings of the current research, it was shown that consumers' interest in purchasing imitation products is very high. Some insights showed that informants have the willingness to keep buying imitation products,

especially from local brands. However, their treatment towards imitation product has slightly changed as time passed by, thus making them feel more skeptical towards the use of the word 'dupes' in social media promotional messages. The informants shared their view on what brands should do to label their imitation products. In addition to that, they prefer to see less of 'dupes' and hope to see more brands use the words 'inspired by' instead. This is to show the originality of the product, so that even if those imitation products still contain characteristics of the high-end ones, the imitations would not be deemed as overly plagiarizing the original high-end products which usually would be called dupes or duplicates implying a replicated product.

This creates an opportunity for business owners to start developing and improving their products to have this kind of feature where the products are made and inspired by famous high-end brands. With this, local brands will be able to provide opportunity for consumers to have access to trendy and good quality goods but with a much lower price instead of buying the unreasonably expensive high-end ones.

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Overall, researchers also hope that this research can be beneficial for those who read it.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the research succeeded to answer the research problem: to identify consumer's values in using makeup dupes. The researchers found 12 consumer values using imitation cosmetics: Utility, Risk Perceptions, Social Influence, Ethical Perceptions, Local Interests, Habits, Desire for Exploration, Price Sensitivity, Alternative, Added Value, Maximum Usage, dan Internet Influence as Purchase Driver.

While makeup dupe is defined by Samantha Primeaux as an alternative cosmetic product which is released by lower-end brand that has a characteristic of a high-end brand, the researchers define it as an alternative cosmetic product which has a similar shade with a certain high-end cosmetic product, but its price is lower than the high-end product, can be accessed in non-premium stores like drugstores or minimarket, and has its own brand identity, such as label, logo, and packaging. This shows that the only element of resemblance in a dupe cosmetic product is in terms of color or shade with a similar quality of the high-end version, which makes dupe products have whole different characteristics and elements of identity with the high-end brands. ▽

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