

**THAT'S A TECHNICAL FOUL! SPORTS FAN IDENTIFICATION AND BUYER BEHAVIOR OF  
COUNTERFEIT SPORTS MERCHANDISE**

Christopher T. Weaver, Siena College, Loudonville, New York, USA  
Cheryl L. Buff, Siena College, Loudonville, New York, USA

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**ABSTRACT**

The current research investigates fan identification and its influence on buyer behavior of authentic and counterfeit sports merchandise. Past research in the area of counterfeiting and sports team identification provide the basis for hypothesis development. While previous research has explored the impact of fan identification on purchase behavior, the type of product purchased (legitimate or counterfeit) has not been evaluated. Using a sample of 261 individuals, the current research suggests that there are differences in the level of fan identification between those who purchase counterfeits both intentionally and inadvertently, as well as those who do not. Additionally, results suggest differences in fan identification across individuals with ranging levels of counterfeit and legitimate product purchase. Results, discussion and implications for future research are discussed.

Keywords: *Counterfeits, Sports Merchandise, Fan Identification, Intention to Buy*