

Authenticity and Counterfeiting: A Qualitative Study in a Babadağlılar Textile Bazaar, Turkey

Özgünlük ve Taklit: Türkiye’de Babadağlılar Tekstil Pazarında Nitel Bir Çalışma

Bilge Aksay*

Abstract: Authenticity and counterfeiting are inversely related constructs. They have sociological, psychological, economic consequences and both find meaning in a specific context. For an artisan authenticity in self and product are intertwined since he/she directly adds value to the product in means of authenticity. As authenticity is the core value for handmade textile products, this paper discusses historical background, perceptions, and the business practices on authenticity and counterfeiting among artisans, in a textile bazaar in Turkey. The authenticity dilemma and counterfeiting among artisans have been investigated through qualitative analysis. Face to face interviews were conducted in a traditional textile bazaar, Denizli, Turkey. The interviews were conducted during 2015 and two visits were made in 2017 and 2018 for observation. Since the data collection process took place before 2020, ethics committee approval has not been obtained. As a result of the research, it was found that artisans considered akhism to be the source of authenticity. Abolished completely in 1913, Akhism is a historical guild organization that centered on the Islamic faith. It has been observed that the idealized value system derived from the Akhi-order, and the mechanisms that accelerate counterfeiting lead to an authenticity dilemma. Based on the post-secular theory, it is argued that individualized Islamic belief enhances authenticity via attained different understandings whereas counterfeiting is mainly related to the sources of the artisans. From this aspect, the research aims to add insights to the production side of counterfeiting among artisans. The study also intends to contribute to the transdisciplinary interest in authenticity literature from business practices and understandings’ perspective.

Structured Abstract: Counterfeiting as an imitation of something else with intent to deceive is reversely related to authenticity. According to OECD statistics, the global trade of counterfeit goods accounted for 250 billion USD in 2007 and increased to 461 billion USD in 2016. Ukraine, India, Russia, Turkey, and Argentina are among the top 5 economies' relative share in global physical counterfeiting (United States Chamber of Commerce, 2016). Turkey has been also reported as the second country, coming after China, on counterfeit textile products targeting the European Union in particular (OECD/EUIPO, 2017). For trademarked products, the identification of counterfeit relies on mostly predetermined objective criteria. However, for cultural objects like handmade home textile products, the application of these criteria becomes harder. The difference between authentic and fake blurs and the identification of authenticity lies in the perception of the consumer, knowledge of experts, and the environment (Kennick, 1985; Kreuzbauer & Keller, 2017; Lowenthal, 1992). Thus the

* Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Adana Alpaslan Türkeş Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi, İşletme Fakültesi, Yönetim Bilişim Sistemleri Bölümü

Asst. Prof. Dr., Adana Alpaslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, Faculty of Business, Management Information Systems

ORCID 0000-0002-0563-7778

baksay@atu.edu.tr

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perceptions and practices about counterfeiting and authenticity among artisans should be discussed through the historical and cultural backgrounds.

This study aims to address two research questions: What is the source of authenticity according to the artisans? And related to the main question of the study, what are the accelerating mechanisms for counterfeiting?

A study on authenticity and counterfeiting among artisans is significant for three reasons. First, the discussion on Akhism as the roots of authenticity among Turkish artisans may have the potential to contribute to the cultural side of the authenticity construct. Despite the tendency to underestimate the importance of counterfeiting among artisans unlike million-dollar brands, many rural parts even in the developed countries gain profits from local authentic products. Moreover, a discussion on the relationship between authenticity and counterfeiting may add new insights to the literature. Because understanding this relationship has the potential to decrease counterfeit production where generally small business owners' rights are often neglected. Secondly, many people buy handmade home textile products with the expectation of buying authentic ones. Studies conducted from the artisans' side may help to enlighten consumers on what is to be expected and what is to be demanded. Thirdly, the study is hoped to add insights to the authenticity term from post secularism theory as the authenticity has a link to the belief system. The study also intends to contribute to the transdisciplinary interest in post secularism literature from business practices and understandings' perspective.

Ethnic handmade products reflect expressive symbolism for their capacity to represent the producers' emotions, the group identity of the artisan, and the connection between cultures (Shiner, 1994). In Turkey, where Islam is accepted by %99 of the population, Akhism tradition is found to be an important source of the Turkish management system (Kart, Yeşil, 2019; Çalışkan & İkiz, 1993). Akhism is a name given to the unity of craftsmen, artisans, and tradesmen unions in Anatolia from the XIII century to the beginning of the XIX century. Differing from Byzantine guilds, Akhism organization did not only regulate the working conditions but also enhanced as a social security mechanism among employees, employers, consumers, and even society as a whole (Kızıler, 2015: 414). Certain behavioral and ethical rules attributed to Akhism determined Anatolian society's national character for centuries (İnalçık, 2016: 51).

To understand the source of authenticity and the accelerating mechanisms for counterfeiting explanatory research was conducted. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with four artisans and observation was also used for additional information. Denizli is a well-known city for its entrepreneurial culture in the discourse of Akhism (İrmiş & Eroğlu, 2015). During the interviews, it was noted that all the artisans were aware of the poem on the entrance, in addition to this, they all declared their respect for Akhism tradition.

The bazaar and the artisans are a very good example of Akhism. A poet is representing Akhism values at the entrance of the bazaar as follows:

“Enter the bazaar praying, don't forget to salaam
Don't weigh less, don't keep the meter lack
To be on gods' service is to service people
Take seriously this word, don't underestimate

While thinking about delivering, while thinking about buying, while thinking about the measure, weight, and selling

Don't adore money, don't forget humanity”

Authenticity in self, product, and counterfeiting are closely related to constructs among artisans (Dutton, 2003). In this case study, rather than asserting all artisans counterfeit, the accelerating, enabling processes, and understandings are discussed. Counterfeiting requires a business network for production, distribution, and sales. The religious networks serve as a facilitator. In the sociological, and business context of Turkey, the economy has been the primary concern for the interest groups (Shambayati, 1994). Mostly Islamic religious business networks enhanced trust and solidarity in the unstable economic environment as a reaction for market capitalism reaching also an identity crisis between modernity and authenticity among small business owners (Özcan & Turunç, 2011). The reintegration of Islam towards greater cultural authenticity claims has accelerated since the 2000s (Mardin, 2005). As a secular country founded in 1923, “Muslim democracy”, “democratic Islamism” terms are among the descriptions of the current government (Alvi, 2015). Thus the social, political, and economic sphere led Turkey to be an example of a post-secular country (Nagata, 2019).

In Turkey, rather than being a matter of choice between secular or religious, new social compositions arise (Göle, 1997). Either secular or religious both parties emphasize religion as the main source of ethical values. The shift to a market-oriented economy in Turkey increased the investment of religious brotherhoods in the economy. Buğra (2002) states that Islamic business associations serve trustable connections for subcontracting, retailing, the establishment of representative agencies, reducing uncertainty costs related to information gathering, and contract breach. Contrary to the modernist perspective emphasizing the decline of religious content in arts (Phillips & Steiner, 1999), artisans' perspectives that do not attend to a brotherhood overlaps with a post-secular perspective. In this sense, artisans who do not attend any religious network also emphasize Akhism and Islam as an inspiring source for their authentic products.

Theoretically, this paper adds insight to authenticity discussions from an emic perspective. As the artisans in search of authenticity attend to religious brotherhoods, they face modernist paradoxes such as economic pressures on high profit and competition as well as identity construction and meaning creation. These pressures with the advantages of the trust-based network may have the potential to accelerate counterfeiting. Practically, this paper arouses attention to informal network ties to prevent counterfeiting. Future research may focus on differentiated meanings and symbols attained to authenticity.

Keywords: Authenticity, counterfeiting, Akhism, Turkey, Post-secularism.

Öz: Özgünlük ve taklit birbiriyle zıt anlamda ilişkili kavramlardır. Bu kavramlar, belirli bir bağlamda anlam kazanır ve her ikisinin de soyolojik, psikolojik ve ekonomik sonuçları bulunmaktadır. Bir zaaatkar, ürünün değerini özgünlük üzerinden kazandırdığı için, bireyin özgünlüğü ve ürünlerdeki özgünlük birbirleriyle ilişkilidir. Özgünlüğün el ürünü tekstil ürünlerinde temel değer olmasından hareketle, bu makale Türkiye’de bir tekstil pazarında zanaatkarların özgünlük ve taklitle ilişkin uygulamalarını, algılamalarını ve tarihsel arka planı tartışmaktadır. Zanaatkarlar arasındaki özgünlük ve taklit ikilemi nitel analiz ve yazın taraması üzerinden incelenmiştir. Türkiye Denizli’de bulunan geleneksel bir tekstil pazarında yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler 2015 yılında gerçekleştirilmiş olup, 2017 ve 2018 yıllarında gözlem amacıyla iki ziyaret gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplama süreci 2020 öncesinde olduğu için, bu araştırma için etik onam formu alınmamıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, zanaatkarların ahiliği özgünlüğün kaynağı olarak nitelendirdikleri bulunmuştur. 1913’te tamamen ortadan kaldırılan ahilik, İslam inancını merkeze alan tarihi bir lonca teşkilatıdır. Ahilikten kaynağını alan idealize edilmiş değerler sistemi ve taklitçiliği hızlandıran mekanizmaların özgünlüğü çıkmaza sürüklediği görülmüştür. Postseküler teoriyi temel alarak, bireysel İslami inancın farklı anlamlara açık olması nedeniyle özgünlüğü sağladığı, taklitçiliğin ise zanaatkarın kaynaklarıyla ilişkili olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Bu yönüyle çalışma zanaatkarlar arasındaki taklit üretim sürecinin iç yüzünü anlamaya katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışma, aynı zamanda özgünlük alanyazınına iş süreçleri ve anlayışları itibarıyla katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özgünlük, taklit, Ahilik, Türkiye, Post-sekülerizm.

Introduction

Counterfeiting as an imitation of something else with intent to deceive is reversely related to authenticity. To prove the ownership of the goods marked pottery used in China four to five thousand years ago. Since then, different stamps and marks have been used to identify the producer and the merchant of the product (Chaudhry & Zimmerman, 2013). Despite the precautions and enforcement, counterfeit products increased and became widespread all over the world. Product counterfeiting, "the unauthorized imitative production of products and/or services"(Yang & Fryxell, 2009) has been an ethical issue (Hilton, Choi, & Chen, 2004) and economic problem since ancient times. According to OECD statistics, the global trade of counterfeit goods accounted for 250 billion USD in 2007 and increased to 461 billion USD in 2016. Ukraine, India, Russia, Turkey, and Argentina are among the top 5 economies' relative share in global physical counterfeiting (United States Chamber of Commerce, 2016). Turkey has been also reported as the second country, coming after China, on counterfeit textile products targeting the EU in particular (OECD/EUIPO, 2017).

For trademarked products, the identification of counterfeit relies on mostly predetermined objective criteria. However, for cultural objects like handmade home textile products, the application of these criteria becomes harder. The difference between authentic and fake blurs and the identification of authenticity lies in the perception of the consumer, knowledge of experts, and the environment (Kennick, 1985; Kreuzbauer & Keller, 2017; Lowenthal, 1992). This contradiction makes counterfeiting relative such that the difference between authentic and fake alterable to time and place, necessitating field-specific measure of legitimacy due to creation and manipulation through social processes (Gibson, 2014).

Handmade textile products are mostly expected to answer modern times' needs but at the same time reflect historical and traditional qualities (Lisa Maria Turunen & Laaksonen, 2011) presenting authenticity. A study in a search of authenticity in craft souvenirs reveals that craft's uniqueness, high-quality artisanship, aesthetic criteria for color and design, function, an illustration of cultural and historical connection, and truthfulness are among the characteristics of souvenir authenticity (Littrell, Anderson, & Brown, 1993). Moreover for artistic creation, authenticity embedded in the object is linked to the artists' ethical conscience and personal authenticity (Reimer, 2007: 1127). Thus a link between authenticity in product and self is expected especially for the artisans that produce them where the perception of authenticity is ensured by its links to history and interpretation throughout the search of the artisan to self.

Ethnic handmade products reflect expressive symbolism for their capacity to represent the producers' emotions, the group identity of the artisan, and the connection between cultures (Shiner, 1994). In Turkey, where Islam is accepted by %99 of the population, Akhism tradition is found to be an important source of the Turkish management system (Kart& Yeşil, 2019; Çalışkan & İkiz, 1993). Akhism is a name given to the unity of craftsmen, artisans, and tradesmen unions in Anatolia from the XIII century to the beginning of the XIX century. Differing from Byzantine guilds, Akhism organization did not only regulate the working conditions but also enhanced as a social security mechanism among employees, employers, consumers, and even society as a whole (Kızılar, 2015: 414). Certain behavioral and ethical rules attributed to Akhism determined Anatolian society's national character for centuries (İnalçık, 2016: 51). Akhism rituals are among the intangible cultural heritage of Turkey (Adıgüzel& Dülger, 2018). Thus, in contemporary Turkey, Akhism, as a source of authenticity, is discussed concerning value education (Çoban, 2018), entrepreneurship (İrmiş & Eroğlu, 2015).

Authenticity and counterfeiting among artisans have been a neglected issue except for a few studies (Jones & Yarrow, 2013; Notar, 2006). Besides, most of the studies on counterfeiting have been conducted in developed countries from a purchasing perspective focusing on the ethical intentions of the consumers (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006), and symbolic mean in tourism literature (Jamal & Hill, 2004; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Littrell, 1990). This limited number of studies is mostly quantitative which may prohibit deep understanding of the mechanisms and determinants of counterfeiting, but still leaving a gap about the supply side of counterfeiting among artisans. Furthermore, few studies have taken counterfeiting among artisans (Finger & Schuler, 2004), mostly negligible for their economic impact in general. Despite the considerable amount of studies devoted to the importance of Akhism among artisans and craftsmen (İnalçık, 2016), there remains a research gap in the contemporary understanding and practice of authenticity and counterfeiting related to Akhism and religious brotherhoods as reflections of Akhism in Turkey.

A study on authenticity and counterfeiting among artisans is significant for three reasons. First, the discussion on Akhism as the roots of authenticity among Turkish artisans may have the potential to contribute to the cultural side of the authenticity construct. Despite the tendency to underestimate the importance of counterfeiting among artisans unlike million-dollar brands, many rural parts even in the developed countries gain profits from local authentic products. Moreover, a discussion on the relationship between authenticity and counterfeiting may add new insights to the

literature. Understanding this relationship may decrease counterfeit production where generally small business owners' rights are often neglected. Secondly, many people buy handmade home textile products with the expectation of buying authentic ones. Studies conducted from the artisans' side may help to enlighten consumers on what is to be expected and what is to be demanded. Thirdly, the study is hoped to add insights to the authenticity term from post secularism theory as the authenticity has a link to the belief system. The study also intends to contribute to the transdisciplinary interest in post secularism literature from business practices and understandings' perspective.

There are two research questions in this study: What is the source of authenticity according to artisans? And related to the main question of the study, what are the accelerating mechanisms for counterfeiting?

In the search for the source of authenticity, Akhi organizations and their relation to Islam are discussed based on literature, due to its mechanisms for creating different understandings and to reveal sociological and economic conditions under which artisans operate. Resting on post-secular theory, it is argued that individualized belief enhances authenticity via attained different understandings whereas counterfeiting is mainly related to the sources of the artisans. The context of the research is followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Counterfeiting and Authenticity

Counterfeiting is a global issue that has historical, ethical, commercial reasons, and consequences. Eisend and Schuchert-Güler (2006) define counterfeiting in the existence of "an original product with a remarkable brand value worth copying". The product looks like having the same characteristics as the original one but usually having a lower price than the original. Counterfeit trade is defined as "*trade in goods that, be it due to their design, trademark, logo, or company name, bear without authorization a reference to a brand, a manufacturer, or any organization which warrants for the quality or standard conformity of the goods in such a way that the counterfeit merchandise could, potentially, be confused with goods that rightfully use this reference*" (Staake, Thiesse, & Fleisch, 2009: 322). For handmade textile products, the design itself creates value in the product via authenticity perception. In this case, creative artisans would face difficulties in sustaining their quality and creativity and less motivation to do so (Grossman & Shapiro, 1986: 3).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, authentic means "undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine definition of authenticity". The word has three sub-meanings. First, "*made or done traditionally or originally, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original*", the second one is "*made or done traditionally or originally, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original*" As the third meaning, "*relating to or denoting an emotionally appropriate, significant, purposive, and responsible mode of human life*" appears. The etymological root of "authenticity" leans to Greek *autos* or "self" and "prepared" (Lindholm, 2013: 362). Mostly authenticity is assessed as a culture bond term, which gains meaning in modern Western life in the relationship between self and society (Handler, 1986). During the middle ages, the individual was part of society and God's cosmos, but the modernism paradigm introduced science and knowledge as an authority to human life opening the discussion in search of true self separating it from the cosmos or God's faith (S. Jones, 2010). For the modern world man, authenticity enables the individual as an autonomous actor to take part in the social order, participating in public affairs, and behave in dignity rather than honor (Guignon, 2004).

Theodossopoulos (2013) points out that authenticity gains meaning with the existence of authentic the self and the exotic other. Thus, contrary to the West, authenticity in the East is interpreted with religion and history (Dressler, Geaves, & Klinkhammer, 2009). "Islamic authenticity" (Woltering, 2002) or "Muslim authenticity" (Mandaville, 2003) concepts appear as a reaction to every aspect of Western life and values by Muslim actors (Lee, 1997).

In the contemporary usage of authenticity, historical origin, and identity (Lindholm, 2013: 363) are the two main components. These meanings of authenticity are linked with expressive authenticity in the artistic discourse, as the expression of an artist's or a society's values and beliefs (Dutton, 2003). In the context of artisans, historical origin, and identity which reflect the authentic value of the product is embedded in varying understandings on religion and social differentiation. Different understandings of religion and social differentiation highlight post-secular complexities (Moberg, Granholm & Nynäs, 2012) in Turkey.

These linkages between authenticity and counterfeiting necessitate explaining the context under which artisans operate. The context leans to the historical guild system called Akhism and the contemporary Islamic brotherhood system in which the artisans operate.

Islamic Brotherhoods: From Akhism to Today's Islamic Brotherhoods

Akhism was dominant in Anatolia from the 13th century until the 19th century (İrmiş, 1998). Akhi organizations are assessed as a civic settlement in Anatolia, Balkans, Middle East to the Caucasus constituting mainly from the craftsmen, artisans, and other professional experts. The akhi lodges are mainly established by craftsman, artisans, and tradesmen declaring work ethics and business principles (Aktay & Topçuoğlu, 2007; Hacıgökmen, 2012), but they can't be assessed as professional organizations. The professional and moral education were taken many years under a mentor in akhi lodges. The apprentice was called a youngster. Only if he had ethical and professional values approved by the master, he was accepted to be an akhi after a ceremony. Being a master did not have a lifelong guarantee since measures like constant control and customer feedback were routine parts of the system (Aktay & Topçuoğlu, 2007).

Core values and goals with detailed information about the daily life of Akhis were written in books called "futuvvetname". These books emphasize the characteristics of an ideal man. Characteristics such as integrity, wisdom, being faithful, merciful were exemplified from religious discourse. Besides these ideal characteristics that were determined according to Islam and social life at the period, the professional values of the artisans were also declared. Honesty, working hard, and being loyal to the master was among these professional values (Aktay & Topçuoğlu, 2007). An akhi's efforts through being a virtuous person were characterized by six features. In this context, three things banned for an akhi were his eyes from forbidden by Islam, mouth from statements forbidden by Islam, hands from cruelty. Three open things are door to guests, purse to the deprived, meals to all hungry (Özerkmen, 2004).

To protect the ones under his orders, being patient, not boasting, not to give in for wealth, love for younger, respect for older, telling the truth for god's sake, precluding injustice are among Akhis core values (Çalışkan & İkiz, 1993). Master of an artisan or a craft was responsible for all needs of his apprentice. His responsibilities included wisdom, mastery in the profession, and also ensuring the financial source in the event of being master, marriage, etc. On the other hand, this dependence on financial and professional sources strengthens the hierarchical structure in the society (Shinder, 1978). Akhi organizations also prevented a competitive market by limiting the resources of its members. One example of preventing monopolistic structure is "allocation policy" according to which the guild did not have enough material to be a monopoly in the market (Erdem, 2010). They also considered consumer rights. Proverbs such as "throwing the shoes to the roof" exist in Turkish which was a practice among Akhi shoemakers. In the case of default shoe production, these shoes were being put on the roof of the shoemaker as a punishment.

Baer (1970) mentions that the functions of the Akhi's can not be confined to just craftsmen and artisans organizations rather they fulfill various purposes such as economic, fiscal, administrative, and social. During the Mongol invasion of Anatolia, they were also active actors in political life. So that İbni Battuta writes about the authority of Akhi's have equal to the Sultan in the peripheral areas of the Ottoman Empire. İbni Battuta features Akhis' aims as contravening to tyrants,

supporters of tyrants, during the 14th century (Arnakis, 1953). Akhi guild system prevented modernization during the Ottoman era due to its judicial system and regulations (Kuran, 1989; Kuran & Lustig, 2012).

With the expansion of the borders of the Ottoman state, relations with non-Muslim communities increased, and this development led to some changes in the akhi system. The most important of these developments is the emergence of common working areas with non-Muslim segments. As a result of this development, a new institution "gedik" to fulfill the functions of Akhism had been founded. Gediks started to be established in 1727 and abolished in 1913 (Acar, 2018).

It has to be noted that after the republican era had started in 1923, all Sufi movements were prohibited and tekkes, Islamic monasteries were abolished (Arslan, 2000) where mosques were kept which functioned as just a religious place to practice the Islamic orders in daily life under the control of the government. Although these systems were abrogated in the early 20th century, traces of the Akhism and religious brotherhood ties have still been remaining (Özbirecikli, 2010). Republican institutions encouraging hard work, industriousness, and rationalism gave rise to modernist Sufi orders (Arslan, 2000). Conferences are held in the name of Akhism, awards are given to an ideal type of artisan, a university, and an academic journal exist in contemporary Turkey. On the contrary, like every organization evolving with time and needs, many disputes arose on Akhism where limited awareness appears in the public domain. Since it is an abolished organization, it creates an abundant way of business life distilled with universal values.

Effects of Islamic Brotherhoods on Authenticity and Counterfeiting

Either secular or Islamic, the members of any kind of network dominated business life since the foundation of Turkey, 1923. Contrary to the industrialization process during the late nineteenth century in the West, due to under-institutionalism and pressure of industrialization, social networks leaning to religious brotherhoods that present extra resources in a world lack of resources, became the dominant business culture in Turkish business life (Bugra, 1994). During the years starting from the 1950s, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, mainly consisting of artisans and crafts, accepted Islamic values in the discourse, and religious brotherhood networks arose.

These Islamic brotherhoods answer two kinds of needs of the artisans. One of them is psychological and the other is economic (Buğra, 2002; Mardin, 2006). Rapid industrialization in Turkey accelerated migration from rural parts to cities, leaving people alone without strong social ties in crowded cities. The religious networks enabled newcomers to attend social life and acceptance of the city's social structure (Heper, 1981). On the other hand, the Islamic guilds also represent a subculture based on trust and informal networks where the business system suffers from widespread mistrust (Kuran, 1995: 165-168). The necessity towards profit-making and network structure accelerated political Islam whereas members of Islamic networks gained more share from the government, as organized civil structures and their resemblance in Islamic discourse with the government (Onis, 1997). Since then economic and psychological gains created by the Islamic brotherhoods attracted more people, the gap between the secular or Islamic perception among the society widened up even in very similar subgroups of the society such as artisans in a small bazaar.

The shift to the market-oriented economy in Turkey increased the investment of religious brotherhoods in the economy and making them major actors in the economy and political life. Buğra (2002) states that Islamic business associations serve trustable connections for subcontracting, retailing, the establishment of representative agencies, reducing uncertainty costs related to information gathering, and contract breach. Islamic networks at the same time help to gain competitive advantages to the members. Artisans lacking expertise and financial resources get the opportunity of using networks' resources.

Authenticity in self, product, and counterfeiting are closely related to constructs among artisans (Dutton, 2003). In this case study, rather than asserting all artisans who are active members of brotherhoods counterfeit, the accelerating and enabling processes and understandings are discussed. Counterfeiting requires a business network for production, distribution, and sales. The religious networks serve as a facilitator. In the sociological and business context of Turkey, the economy has been the primary concern for the interest groups (Shambayati, 1994), and mostly Islamic religious business networks enhanced trust and solidarity in the unstable economic environment as a reaction for market capitalism reaching also an identity crisis between modernity and authenticity among small business owners (Özcan & Turunç, 2011). The reintegration of Islam towards cultural authenticity claims has accelerated since the 2000s (Mardin, 2005). As a secular country founded in 1923, “Muslim democracy”, “democratic Islamism” terms are among the descriptions of the current government (Alvi, 2015). Thus the social, political, and economic sphere led Turkey to be an example of a post-secular country (Nagata, 2019).

In Turkey, rather than being a matter of choice between secular or religious, new social compositions arise (Göle, 1997). Either secular or religious both parties emphasize religion as the main source of ethical values. Contrary to the modernist perspective emphasizing the decline of religious content in arts (Phillips & Steiner, 1999), artisans’ perspectives that do not attend to a brotherhood overlap with a post-secular perspective. In this sense, artisans who do not attend any religious network also emphasize Akhism and Islam as an inspiring source for their authentic products.

Parallel to Shiner (1994)’s claims that rather than inauthentic work, it is the process of modernization, and urbanization destroying the context in which traditional artifacts are produced, beyond these nearly all artisans and craftsmen are left with the decision to connect with religious networks or to stay alone and accept the tradition, in this study Akhism, as a discourse. Akhism, in the Turkish context, is assessed as an ideal type way of business life and a basis for universal values such as virtue, honesty, integrity. The traces of Akhism emerge in two ways. Firstly, as a discourse by artisans and secondly, attendance to a religious brotherhood offering a way to authentic Islam.

The Context of the Research

The study is conducted in Babadağlılar bazaar, Denizli, Turkey. Denizli is a well-known city for its entrepreneurial culture in the discourse of Akhism (İrmiş & Eroğlu, 2015). Twelve firms from Denizli are ranked in the top 500 in Turkey, textile goods are the main export products. Babadağlılar bazaar is the most well-known textile bazaar in Denizli.

Babadağlılar bazaar was built in 1976 by some entrepreneurs from Babadağ. Kazım Kaynak, an entrepreneur from Babadağ, was the initiator. Cengiz Bektaş born in Denizli, 1934, a well-known architect in Turkey was designated as the architect of the bazaar. A project, applied in the United States of America for a museum was selected for the bazaar. The main architectural feature of the bazaar is its ergonomics. The architectural design of the bazaar allows the handicapped to visit owing to the huge corridor for climbing the floors.

Mustafa Kaynak told that there were 15-18 partners of the bazaar at the beginning and they established a limited partnership. All the shops used to be rented and all the income was divided up conforming to shares. After 15 years from the foundation, disagreements started about the ownership of the bazaar. It was converted to an individual land register. The bazaar continued to be wholesale commerce centers until the ’90s. The bazaar has a business culture of its own. The artisans declared that a religious person called Yusuf Ahmet hodja coming and praying every morning for the opening of the bazaar from 1978 to 1998. They all prayed for permissible profit and health. Although the praying ritual was not continued after the hodjas’ death, artisans did this practice of their own. At the entrance of the bazaar there is a poet written by İlhan Canbaba representing Akhism values as follows:

“Enter the bazaar praying, don’t forget to salaam
 Don’t weigh less, don’t keep the meter lack
 To be on gods’ service is to service people
 Take seriously this word, don’t underestimate
 While thinking about delivering, while thinking about buying, while thinking about the
 measure, weight, and selling
 Don’t adore money, don’t forget humanity”

Overall, the artisans may subsume or declare any value or way of life on account of Akhi organizations that have been abolished nearly a hundred years ago. By attaining universal values to Akhi organizations, they may also get the approval of society and the other actors in the bazaar since the discourse is named as Islam, as a common context. But an artisan in the discourse of Akhism declared being isolated like any European in search of authenticity.

Research Methodology and Sample

To understand the source of authenticity and the accelerating mechanisms for counterfeiting explanatory research was conducted. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with four artisans and observation was also used for additional information. The repeated cross-sectional design was applied. The interviews were conducted during 2015 and two visits were made in 2017 and 2018 for observation. Since the data collection process took place before 2020, ethics committee approval has not been obtained. All the artisans in the bazaar, including the sample, were male and aged between 35 and 65. The semi-structured open questionnaire was used based on Schwartz’s work values. The headings were as follows: Babadağlılar bazaar, personal data, Akhism, leisure time, growth, joint venture, risk-taking, investment, and investment opportunities, environmental consciousness, income, trust, power, work ethics, success, autonomy, conservatism, creativity in work, the meaningfulness of the work, maintenance of order, contribution to society, independence, achievement, recognition, a vehicle for positive relations, status, opportunity to use knowledge, religion and job security. Notes were taken during the interviews and they were compared with two coders to enhance reliability. For the validation of the study, two strategies were used as offered by Cresswell (2014: 201). The context was discussed comprehensively and the prolonged time dedicated to the study ensured the researcher to understand the literature and context more deeply.

Research Findings

All the participants declared counterfeiting and authenticity among the most important problems in the bazaar.

C. *“Our only problem is product replications. They replicate the design of our hand made products and made them on a machine. Eventually, they sell it at a cheaper price than we sell. But if you create new products, different products, you can earn more. Everybody has to do different things. If everyone replicates each other, you can’t win anything. Everybody in the bazaar replicates each other. If he is selling 5, then I can sell 4. This is the dominant logic in the bazaar. Unfortunately, there is more who talk about trust, but very few who live it”.*

Another artisan complained about counterfeiting as follows:

D. *“Handmade goods are produced in different provinces of Denizli and the suppliers don’t sign a formal agreement about the delivery date or keeping the models as secret. Hands made goods are preferred due to their originality. Every shop intends to design and manufacture its model. But producers sometimes sell the models to other merchants. You have to keep your words but under the circumstances, there is nothing you can do. Such things are on the rise for the last 10-15 years. In the past, the contractor used to do his best, and then we talked about the money. Nowadays we first talk about the money, then check for the quality. The suppliers don’t think about the quality or how*

I can sell those poor quality goods. Everybody wants to be rich in a short time, this view causes deprivation...”

Despite all the artisans declare the importance of Akhism in their value systems, solidarity and cooperation could not be achieved in the bazaar. The cooperative spirit of the authentic bazaar has been lost. Nearly all the artisans highlighted the need for the whole advertisement of the bazaar, none accepted to pay for the expenses. The reasons were clarified by two artisans as follows:

A. *“Why should I pay for advertisement expenses for the bazaar? Nobody may know whom the customers will buy. I will pay, others will earn. I cannot accept this.”*

B. *“Nothing can be done with others here. They always talk about dignity, trust, and spirituality but they never behave accordingly...How will the advertisement expenses be divided? I am sure, in the end, I will have to pay more than others.”*

During the study, an artisan who had Islamic network ties mentioned business connection in China, whereas setting business opportunities abroad is very costly and explained as follows:

B. *“If I argue that I do not counterfeit then it will be a lie. We have to counterfeit since the prices are so down. I replicate the model and send the model to a housewife in China. She produces these products as if they were produced in Turkey. I know it is wrong but I don't have any chance left with these low prices...”*

The trust-based network in the Islamic brotherhood was mentioned.

A. *“We buy and sell our goods to our brothers...We know we will take the money, both sides know the importance of keeping promises in our brotherhood. We cannot be so sure when we are making business with others.”*

Turkish art music, Ottoman-era civilization representing ideological and mythological views (Feldman, 1990) was used as a symbol of authenticity. During the interviews, in one of the artisan shop representing solely Akhi values, Turkish art music was playing and when the reason was asked, he responded as follows:

C. *“The others underestimate that our job is related to art and history. Art is something beyond the moment you live; you have to add your soul to the teachings of the previous artisans.”*

Another artisan explained the authenticity in his product through education and his way of life:

D. *“I have already graduated from a secular school. The school made me the person I am now. That's why I do not attend to a religious network in my search for authenticity. I just believe Islam from deep of my heart.”*

All the merchants were aware of the poem on the entrance, in addition to this; they all declared their respect for Akhism tradition. Nearly all the shop owners and the employees are from Babadağ, a province of Denizli. All the firms in the bazaar are classified as SMEs although a few agencies of big enterprises can be found.

In the bazaar, the artisans face the challenge of attending to religious brotherhoods which also serve as business networks. Some artisans, during the interviews, claim that attendants of the so-called brotherhoods give the opportunity of exporting, making new business deals, guaranteeing the sales quantity. Members are motivated to arrange their business and social activities in the community. Strict arrangement of social and personal life may leave limited space for the self who has the potential for creating new ideas, styles, or designs for the artisans. To reveal the membership of a particular brotherhood, newspapers, representing a particular religious brotherhood, could have been seen on the desk of the artisan. The visibility of a particular newspaper enhanced a symbolic

meaning for the customers as well as other artisans and suppliers that the artisan was a member or having sympathy for that Islamic guilt.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to answer two research questions: What is the source of authenticity according to artisans? And related to the main question of the study, what are the accelerating mechanisms for counterfeiting? To do so, firstly, authenticity, and counterfeiting terms are discussed. For the West, modernity is dynamic in its nature and creates “other” including Turkey by comparing itself to pre-modern (Robins, 1996) and construes authenticity perception with modernity (Guignon, 2004; S. Jones, 2010). On the contrary, for crafting authenticity, commitment to traditional values, historical origin, and identity were emphasized (C. Jones, Anand, & Alvarez, 2005; S. Jones & Yarrow, 2013). In this context, traditional art was defined as artifacts made in traditional style, materials, and technique but intended for a market by members of a small scale society (Shiner, 1994). Beyond this contradiction, for an artist to uphold expressive authenticity in terms of a true expression of an individuals’ or society’s values and beliefs (Dutton, 2003) become complicated in the Turkish context. Main reasons for this stem from macro-level settings and artisans’ perceptions at the micro-level.

The underlying reasons for counterfeiting and authenticity were explained by qualitative analysis. Dominant discourse among artisans stemmed from Akhi organizations. It has been noted that Akhi organizations have still an impact on business life in Turkey. The understandings of counterfeiting and authenticity were explained by attendance to Islamic brotherhoods and accepting Akhism as a discourse. Based on the post-secular theory it is argued that individualized belief enhances authenticity via attained different understandings whereas counterfeiting is mainly related to the sources of the artisans. An understanding of the idealized Islamic brotherhood system originating from Akhism and the contemporary business practices linked to the present religious brotherhood system creates an authenticity dilemma. Attending to a religious brotherhood at present has the potential to limit authenticity via rituals, opportunities, threats, and the moral framework it declares for the members. The intention of this paper is not to accuse religious networks of counterfeiting as the only mechanism but rather to clarify the meaning of Akhism and its reflections on authenticity.

At the macro level, the social structure in Turkey is contradictory to the West in terms of what Habermas (2008) calls a post-secular society. In the West, religious communities survive in an increasingly secularized environment whereas, in Turkey, secular communities survive in an increasingly religious environment (Özcan & Turunç, 2011). More than that, as the answers for the problems of this world creating technology and adapting it to an ordinary individual’s life, left the artisans, no different than the whole nation, for the choice of authentic identity. At macro-level Turkey mainly adopted authentic identity leaning to Ottoman eras’ old days (Kosebalaban, 2007). The whole nation divided into two conflicting camps, leaving distrustful to each other (Göle, 1997). In this context, secular or non-believers and religious other concepts appear as two conflicting camps in Turkish society (Onis, 1997). The artisans, being left aside from institutionalized and high-profit establishments, have two options left. They may accept one identity leaning to the physical establishment of the bazaar and the discourse it presents in the name of Akhism or be a member of Islamic brotherhoods. Parallel to this, all the artisans declared respect and adopted Akhism as identity. If the definition of authenticity as “*a set of qualities that people in particular time and place have come to agree to represent an ideal or exemplar*” (Vannini & Williams, 2009: 3), the bazaar, with its culture might be evaluated as authentic. The poet at the entrance, commitment during the first years of the bazaar, and the cohesiveness may be evaluated as authentic. These artisans were aiming for economic as well as social development through their realities, values, and necessities as a reaction to Western life and values.

An artisan in the discourse of Akhism gains approval from the brotherhood members to an extent since the shared discourse is Islam. Unlike their colloquies who are members of a religious brotherhood, lack of network and limited support from governmental organizations force them to choose different business strategies to survive. Creating their designs rather than counterfeiting, being authentic in Western terms are applied as effective strategies in a semi-formal business environment (Kamrava, 2004). Even though the dominant discourse among the artisans is Islam, Akhism followers mainly subsume universal and abstract values such as friendship, loyalty, trust in a master-apprentice relationship, etc. leaning to universal values.

Among the members of the Islamic brotherhood, membership may be attained to authenticity in modern life as it declares interest and loyalty to the old religious practices, traditions, and discourse besides obedience to the leader of the brotherhood. But for some strict brotherhoods, attendance may yield alienation from the social world at the same time. Because some brotherhoods demand loyalty to group decisions, obedience, and attendance to social activities thus alienating the group from the nonmembers and self. An actor aiming to search for authenticity in the modern world by attending to brotherhood faces the dilemma of being true self and releasing from his own identity but accepting the groups'. A tragic dilemma for the member is to stay authentic with the help of the group in the face of modern and Christian led economy or staying alone through the search for authenticity.

The argument as all Islamic brotherhood members are counterfeiting is not preserved rather the groups' dynamics and opportunities were discussed. The network of Islamic brotherhoods may enhance the rationalization process of counterfeiting by creating in group-cohesion. As the actors of the Islamic brotherhoods alleged to behave like just brothers in a family, counterfeiting of the outer group members' products becomes acceptable considering the group dynamics. Additionally, these networks serve the social and economic needs of the members which enhance craftsmen and artisans to deal with consumers and suppliers abroad where it would be impossible to arrange with limited sources. When it comes to how the completely alien brothers get to know each other in a different social context, the symbols appeared as the answer in the study. The symbols used among the alien members of Islamic brotherhoods contained apparel, greetings, displaying a newspaper published by the brotherhood in front of the shop.

Parallel to the arguments of Beyer (2009) one cannot notice the differences in understandings on counterfeit and authentic at first sight according to geography, region, or even in a small textile bazaar since they lie in the personal choices of the actor. As a consumer, especially for anyone foreign to the cultural context and discourse, one cannot so easily label and understand the difference between counterfeit and the authentic as differences stem from paradoxes at the macro and micro level.

Theoretically, this paper adds insight to authenticity discussions from an emic perspective. As the artisans in search of authenticity attend to religious brotherhoods, they face modernist paradoxes such as economic pressures on high profit and competition as well as identity construction and meaning creation. These pressures with the advantages of a network based on trust may have the potential to accelerate counterfeiting. On the other hand, the findings of this study cannot be generalizable due to the small sample size. The restricted context also presented the advantage of detailed interviews and observations.

Practically, this paper arouses attention to informal network ties to prevent counterfeiting. For the purchasers of traditional art products, it would have added value to consider the symbolic clues in the shop like music to differentiate between authentic and fake. Future research may focus on differentiated meanings attained to authenticity and symbols. Also, constructs such as authenticity, counterfeiting, alienation, and trust should be discussed from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

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