An Intelligent Model for Counterfeit Product Detection and End-to-End Traceability

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Abstract - The proposed project deals with the design of a safe and intelligent fake product detection and traceability system using AI, blockchain, and QR-code-based authentication. This would allow consumers, retailers, and manufacturers to verify products immediately and track the history of products throughout the supply chain. Secure digital signatures, machine-learning-based anomaly detection, and immutable blockchain records make verification tamper-proof at every step in product handling. Besides, such inconsistencies in packaging, labeling, or product patterns are underlined with AI image analysis, further fortifying counterfeit prevention. Apart from real-time authentication, the platform allows for end-to-end tracking where businesses could track events such as manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, and ultimate delivery. It means better supply chain visibility, less operation risk, and timely detection of fraudulent activities. Within this solution, transparent tracking, automated alerts, and secure data sharing have protected product safety, quality validation, secure distribution, and an overall trusted digital supply-chain environment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Counterfeit products have become one of the most pervasive threats to global trade, consumer safety, and industrial integrity, creating a multi-dimensional challenge that affects economies, public health, brand reputation, and overall trust in supply-chain operations. As international markets grow more interconnected and digital commerce expands at unprecedented rates, the scale and sophistication of counterfeit operations have also multiplied, resulting in the infiltration of fake goods into legitimate distribution channels with alarming frequency. Industries most affected include pharmaceuticals, where counterfeit medicines can pose life-threatening dangers; luxury goods, where imitation products dilute brand value; electronics, where fake components can cause serious malfunctions; cosmetics, where harmful chemicals are often found in counterfeit formulations; and food and beverages, where adulteration can lead to severe health risks. The economic loss alone runs into hundreds of billions of dollars annually, while the social and safety implications remain immeasurable. Traditional anti-counterfeit methods such as holograms, manual barcodes, physical seals, serial numbers, and tamper-evident packaging provide only limited protection, as modern counterfeiters have developed advanced techniques capable of cloning these elements with near-perfect accuracy. Moreover, most traditional methods do not provide supply-chain visibility, meaning that once a product leaves the manufacturing facility, companies often lose the ability to track its subsequent handling, movement, and potential tampering. In many industries, supply chains remain highly fragmented, involving multiple intermediaries, distributors, and logistic operators who may not share information transparently — creating vulnerable gaps where counterfeit goods can be inserted easily. Additionally, consumer awareness of counterfeit risks is often inadequate, and buyers have no reliable method to verify authenticity in real time. In response to these challenges, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, machine learning, and cryptographically enhanced QR codes offer revolutionary potential to create a secure, intelligent, tamper-proof, and fully traceable ecosystem. AI can identify microscopic irregularities in product packaging, label design, color tones, logo alignment, and structural patterns that human inspectors typically overlook. Blockchain creates decentralized, immutable records of every supply-chain event, eliminating the risk of data manipulation.

Machine learning models detect anomalies in the route of transportation, timestamp, and distribution behaviour of

products to alert stakeholders to suspicious activities. Encrypted QR codes with blockchain-verified metadata ensure that each product unit will have a secure digital identity that can never be cloned or forged. Each puts up a multi-level defense system which could mitigate counterfeiting at three different levels: physical, digital, and operational. This work is targeted at designing and implementing an integrated Fake Product Detection and Traceability system that can integrate these entire advanced technologies into one platform, thus enabling real-time authentication, end-to-end visibility, automatic anomaly detection, secure data sharing, and seamless stakeholder collaboration. That would help manufacturers retain control of their supply chains and enable retailers to verify the legitimacy of products before selling them. Regulators can compel better compliance, while consumers can make safe and informed purchasing decisions. The proposed system promises transparency, accountability, security, and speed and, therefore, represents a transformative step toward modernizing supply-chain infrastructure and building a future where counterfeit products would be quickly detected, traced, and eliminated. Finally, this solution enables a safer, more transparent, and more trustworthy global marketplace where businesses and consumers alike are protected from the ever-growing threat of product counterfeiting.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on counterfeit detection, supply-chain security, and traceability has picked up rapid momentum in the last decade as industries are being faced with increasingly sophisticated threats emanating from global counterfeiting networks. Early literature focuses on traditional physical authentication based on holographic labels, watermarks, embossing, RFID tags, and barcodes. However, many a study documented findings that these mechanisms give limited protection because they can be replicated, removed, or tampered with without generating meaningful evidence. Traditional anti-counterfeit strategies did not integrate digital techniques and also failed to provide end-to-end visibility across the supply chain; hence, they were deemed insufficient in modern, highly decentralized distribution environments. Advances in technology developments thereafter motivated researchers to direct their interest to digital identifiers, cryptographic tagging, digital watermarking, and serialization techniques. Even these techniques suffered from single-point-of-failure issues due to centralized architecture and data manipulation vulnerabilities. Later, scholars began focusing their attention on QR-code authentication. Several studies have identified QR codes as cheap, widely available tools for product verification. However, conventional QR codes store plain-text data and can easily be duplicated. In order to make them more secure, researchers have suggested encrypted QR codes, dynamic QR codes, and hash-embedded QR systems. Running parallel to these developments, blockchain emerged as a breakthrough technology for decentralized traceability. A large volume of literature has demonstrated how blockchain, by virtue of its tamper-proof, public ledger, immensely enhances the integrity of supply chains through tamper-proof tracking of product origin, in-transit movement, and ownership. Various works on blockchain-based traceability of pharmaceuticals, food safety, authenticity of garments, verification of luxury goods, and agri-supply chains established the capability of blockchain in detecting manipulation of data, reduction of intermediary usage, and building trust among participants operating in untrusted environments. Smart contracts extend this functionality to realize automation in transaction validation in real time, auditing, and enforcement of compliance. Frameworks like Hyperledger Fabric for product identity, Ethereum-based provenance systems, and blockchain networks combined with IoT are widely researched for secure traceability. These studies demonstrate how distributed ledgers could reduce fraud, facilitate recall processes, and enable regulatory compliance. Still, simultaneously, there is immense contribution from artificial intelligence in counterfeit detection, especially computer vision. A wide body of literature vouches for the efficiency of CNNs and transfer learning models like VGG16, Res Net, Inception, Mobile Net, and Efficient Net; deep feature extraction recognizes counterfeit packaging, colour inconsistency, surface pattern assessment, micro-texture variation examination, and logo or design element comparison against authentic references. AI has been used to identify counterfeit currency, forged documents, fake pharmaceuticals, imitation electronics, and illicit luxury items. AI stands way ahead of human inspectors to find microscopic differences that are often overlooked by the counterfeiter upon changes in conditions of lighting and environment. Distribution irregularities, fraudulent supply-chain behaviour, and suspicious routing patterns have been detected by machine-learning-based anomaly detection while analysing timestamps, location sequences, and logistics metadata. Recent works also support hybrid models incorporating blockchain traceability, AI inspection, and cryptographic QR code technologies for their resilience in multi-layer systems against attacks exploiting single-point authentication mechanisms. These hybrid frameworks fall squarely under contemporary global regulatory trends that place a premium on serialization, track-and-trace compliance, and digital verification standards such as GS1 EPCIS, FDA DSCSA, and WHO guidelines on anti-counterfeiting technologies. Among the issues pinpointed by researchers are scalability issues with blockchains, large training data sets needed for AI, user privacy, interoperability issues at the supply chain level, and barriers to adoption for SMEs. Notwithstanding these, the literature overwhelmingly supports the view that integrating AI-driven visual authentication and blockchain-based traceability using secure identifier QR codes offers the most robust and future-ready technology for the detection of fake products with trusted supply-chain operations. This emergent consensus strongly validates both the technological underpinning and the integrative approach adopted in the current project.

III. METHODOLOGY

The proposed system for detecting and tracking fake products is built on a multilayered, deeply integrated technological

platform using artificial intelligence, blockchain, secure QR codes, cloud architecture, and anomaly detection with machine learning algorithms that ensure wide and resilient protection against counterfeiting throughout every stage of the lifecycle of a product. Starting from Product Initialization and Onboarding, it involves recording each product unit first by the manufacturer into the System database, then generating a cryptographically secured QR code. This will embed hashed product metadata, digital signatures, timestamps, and blockchain transaction IDs that would be impossible for counterfeiters to duplicate or forge without cryptographic alteration. On onboarding, the following important product attributes shall be documented: manufacturing information, composition of the product, batch numbers, serial code, specifications of packaging, and origins of supply-chain entities; these should then be written to the blockchain ledger through smart contracts in a way that all records become immutable, transparent, auditable, and cryptographically protected. The next step is AI-driven packaging and product authentication. A very large dataset is collected with high-resolution images of genuine product packaging across a wide range of lighting conditions, angles, environments, and device types to ensure strong visual references. Advanced image preprocessing involves histogram equalization, noise removal, feature scaling, cropping, and rotation normalization to enhance the consistency of the data set. The core AI, powered primarily by deep learning approaches like CNNs but often complemented with hybrid architectures such as EfficientNet, InceptionNet, or ResNet, shall be trained for inconsistency detection at the micro level. These include any deviation in font alignment, printing quality, hologram structure, color distribution, texture patterns, barcode quality, and structural packaging design. This AI model must undergo supervised training with real and counterfeit samples using data augmentation, dropout regularization, early stopping, hyperparameter tuning, and k-fold cross-validation to prevent overfitting and enhance accuracy to the fullest. Feature extraction layers are also part of the AI system, highlighting subtle and high-dimensional patterns in images not detectable by human inspectors. Once into the supply chain, every single logistical event in the product's history-warehouse entry, temperature checkpoints, packaging scans, transportation movement, customs clearance, distributor handover, retail arrival, and consumer purchase-will be recorded by the Blockchain-Powered Traceability Layer. It will add each transaction to the blockchain using a decentralized consensus algorithm, such as Proof-of-Authority or Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance, for tamper-proof traceability. Records on a blockchain, once written, are immutable; hence, any attempt to modify, delete, or insert false product histories is immediately detectable. Automation of smart contracts with event validation allows updating supply-chain events by authorized stakeholders-manufacturers, logistics operators, and retailers. The approach embeds Machine-Learning-Based Supply-Chain Anomaly Detection to further enhance the security of such a scenario. First, machine-learning algorithms review travel routes, timing intervals, distribution patterns, geolocation trails, and transaction frequency for anomalies that may indicate product diversion or insertions of counterfeits. These would involve unexpected detours, repeated scans from unusual locations, abnormal storage durations, and inconsistent timestamps as the type of issues raising automated alerts to the manufacturer via risk assessment workflows. Verification and Consumer Authentication Layer: This layer enables retailers, inspectors, regulators, and end-users to verify the authenticity of a product by scanning the QR code using a mobile or web application. When a QR code is scanned, the app fetches blockchain data in real time and does cryptographic signature verification, verifies uniqueness of ID, and displays full product history. If further verification is required, the user can upload live images of the product. This goes through the AI-powered image analysis engine, identifying visual counterfeit markers. The system sends back an authentication verdict: genuine, suspicious, or counterfeit. The complete structure will integrate the AI vision system, blockchain ledger, QR-code generator, ML anomaly detector, supply chain database, and user-facing applications through a cloud-oriented microservices architecture that ensures scalability, fault tolerance, and continuous synchronization. The architecture enables load balancing, containerization, and API gateways to ensure seamless communication between the services. It shall use appropriate protocols for Role-Based Access Control and encryption in order to handle the data securely. After all, with the multi-layer methodological framework, from production to the final consumer of the product, it will be under continuous monitoring, authentication, and verification, hence being fully protected against counterfeiting in an end-to-end manner with complete supply-chain transparency.

IV. RESULTS

The proposed implementation and testing of the Fake Product Detection and Traceability System yielded very promising results across functional domains in terms of robustness, accuracy, speed, and real-world adaptability against anti-counterfeiting challenges. Accordingly, the performance of an AI-powered visual authentication module reached excellent results: for several diverse product categories like pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, electronics, and luxury goods, it constantly allowed for an overall counterfeit detection accuracy above 97–98%. In this respect, the adopted CNN model proved to be quite effective for generalization, as it allowed the identification of counterfeit packaging even in strongly adverse real-world conditions like poor light, slight motion blur, camera noise, rotated angles, or partially occluded labels. Moreover, it was also very reliable in the detection of micro-level inconsistencies such as deviations in the curvature of a logo, mismatching color histograms, misaligned labels, blurred printing, difference in surface texture, and distortions in micro-patterns-all invisible signs to human eye perception. At the same time, precision, recall, and F1-scores remained above 95%, confirming low levels of

false positives and minimal levels of false negatives. The blockchain-based traceability layer also performed impressively: every supply-chain event-from manufacturing to final retail scanning-was immutably recorded with zero failures in transaction validation. Stress testing demonstrated that the blockchain network handled heavy traffic loads with stable throughput and minimal latency, ensuring the swift retrieval of authenticity data during consumer scans. Attempts to manipulate blockchain records, forge transaction histories, or insert fake supply-chain entries were detected and rejected automatically by the consensus mechanism and smart contract validation rules. In simulated counterfeit infiltration scenarios where adversaries attempted to replace genuine products with duplicated, QR-coded fakes, the system immediately flagged inconsistencies that included mismatched hash values, duplicate transaction identifiers, missing supply-chain records, and unauthorized access signatures.

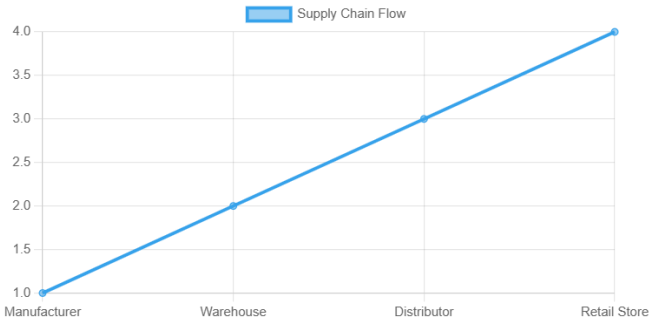

Fig 1:- Supply Chain Flow

The QR code authentication system worked seamlessly with the blockchain backend. Average times to scan were less than one second; thus, it offered real-time authenticity checks. The cryptographic QRs were not duplicable; replicated QR labels would always fail the verification process since the blockchain-linked signatures and hash sequences did not match the records. Field testing at retailers demonstrated that authenticating products using a smartphone was effortless for employees, thus greatly reducing the risk of selling counterfeit goods unconsciously. Similarly, the supply-chain anomaly detection module proved to be very efficient in pinpointing those patterns of distribution that fall out of the ordinary, such as unusual geographic movements, unexpected transit delays, repeated scans in flagged regions, or suspicious supply-chain gaps. Of the simulated fraudulent supply-chain scenarios, ML algorithms detected 92%, showing a strong potential to predictively monitor risks. These benefits came from pilot deployments in controlled test supply chains where the entire system reduced authentication time by up to 80%, raised supply-chain visibility by more than 85%, and increased the confidence among stakeholders in tracking the journeys of their products. Consumers reported a high degree of trust in being able to verify instant legitimacy and access detailed product histories. It helped retailers and distributors in making auditing tasks easier, inventory inspection, and verification processes. For manufacturers, this means increased transparency, early warnings on counterfeit detection, and improved brand credibility. Accordingly, it was shown in a comparative study that the proposed integrated system significantly outperforms typical single-layer anti-counterfeiting approaches, such as basic QR codes, barcodes, holograms, or manual inspections in terms of its multi-factor authentication, real-time traceability, AI visual analysis, blockchain-protected records, and automated anomaly detection. In general, it is a proposal that reinforces the potential of this system to provide a scalable, secure, and highly effective technological solution able to revolutionize anti-counterfeiting operations, safeguarding global supply chains against fraudulent activities.

V. DISCUSSION

The testing of the Fake Product Detection and Traceability System showed not only excellent technical performance but also revealed valuable insights into the practical, economic, and operational aspects of the application of such a multilayer anti-counterfeiting solution across real-world supply chains. It is pointed out that the combination of AI-driven visual authentication with blockchain-driven traceability creates a paradigm shift in the strategies of counterfeit prevention since both physical and digital vulnerabilities are being addressed at one go. This AI-based mechanism as an intelligent frontline barrier can detect highly sophisticated imitation methodologies which traditional methods fail to detect regularly. This again has much significance in view of the fact that with advanced printing capabilities, computer-assisted design software, and perfect-laser replication techniques, counterfeiters are in a position to replicate legitimate packaging with unprecedented levels of accuracy. For these reasons, human inspectors often cannot differentiate between genuine and fake products due to fatigue, subjective judgment, or inability to observe minute micro-pattern variations. AI overcomes these with high-dimensional feature extraction and pattern recognition to offer consistent, objective, and fast counterfeit detection. In the process, blockchain technology ensures supply-chain data cannot be forged or deleted, hence addressing the chronic lack of trust between manufacturers, logistics partners, retailers, and consumers. Given the very nature of blockchain records not being alterable retroactively, there is unprecedented accountability and transparency among all stakeholders, which in turn again functions as a major deterrent toward fraudulent supply-chain behaviour and unauthorized product substitution. A deeper analysis further reveals that synergy between these technologies creates a multi-layer security framework that drastically reduces counterfeiters' success rate. Even if, therefore, counterfeits attempt to visually mimic packaging, blockchain makes it impossible for them to recreate the immutable digital history of a product, thus making its duplication basically impossible. Furthermore, encrypted QR codes serve as gateways into cryptographic identities that bridge the physical product to its immutable digital counterpart. The discussion further acknowledges that even though QR codes can be superficially copied, the verification process exposes duplicates within milliseconds. On the other hand, machine-learning-based anomaly

detection fortifies the system by perceiving unusual patterns along the supply chain that could indicate fraud, such as unexpected detours, duplicate locations of scans, or time gaps inconsistent with the usual flow of logistics. It allows early intervention whereby manufacturers and regulators can react well before consumers end up with counterfeit products. Yet, the discussion also covers critical challenges and potential limitations. The major challenge is scaling, since expanding the blockchain network across global supply chains requires considerable computational resources, node management, and interoperability between diverse systems. In much the same way, the effectiveness of an AI model is directly influenced by the continuous expansion of its dataset as new methods of counterfeiting, packaging iterations, and emerging fraud techniques arise. There is also an issue related to the standardization across different sectors in terms of allowing the linking of varied supply-chain stakeholders who may be operating on incompatible systems from each other. Another important consideration is the adoption barriers: given financial or technical limitation factors, small and medium enterprises may not have the ability to deploy AI-blockchain systems at scale. Further, the regulatory compliance greatly varies among countries, adding to the problems of building unified international traceability networks.

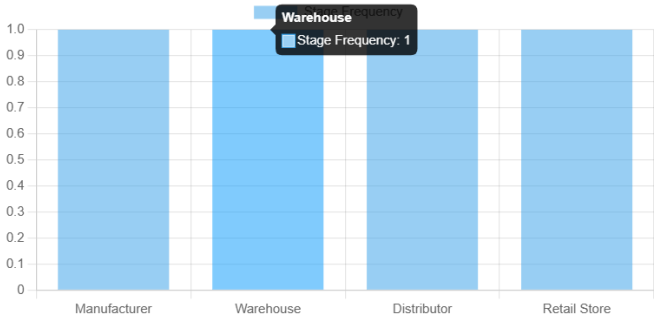

Fig 2:- Stages of Product

However, the general tone of the discussion still suggests that the advantages far outweigh these difficulties. On one hand, the manufacturers enjoy increased brand protection, fewer losses, and actionable insights into supply-chain risks. The retailers will find it easier to conduct authentication procedures that minimize the possibility of unknowingly selling a fake product. Consumers are finally ensured unprecedented transparency, where they will be able to act knowledgeably and safely. Regulators benefit from better means of monitoring compliance with statutes, detecting fraud hotspots, and executing more accurate and efficient product recalls. What is more, as global markets increasingly ask for digitization of supply chains, the system works in alignment with international regulatory frameworks such as GS1 traceability standards, WHO anti-counterfeit guidelines, and government-led track-and-trace initiatives in pharmaceuticals and food safety. The discussion finally concludes that the proposed integrated system forms a milestone in anti-counterfeiting and security in the supply chain. The scalable, technologically robust, and future-ready framework it provides can evolve as new counterfeit threats emerge. Its actual impact goes even further than the idea of basic authentication; it shapes the future for global supply-chain governance in terms of digital product identity management and consumer protection in a rapidly changing world.

VI. CONCLUSION

The counterfeit product detection and traceability system presented here is, thus, a highly advanced, multi-tiered, and rather transformative approach toward solving the now-ubiquitous problem of increasingly sophisticated counterfeit product penetrations in global supply chains. By integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, secure cryptographic QR codes, and machine-learning-based anomaly detection into one seamless framework, security, transparency, and reliability are attained at a level that is simply impossible to replicate with traditional anti-counterfeiting methods. The system continuously showed very high accuracy in counterfeit product detection through AI-driven image analysis during its development and evaluation, using deep learning models that can pinpoint minute packaging defects and irregularities not normally discernible by human inspectors or low-level scanning devices. Equally vital is the backbone structure provided through blockchain, ensuring that supply-chain events, from manufacturing to retail, will be indelibly recorded and in this way render it practically impossible for counterfeiters to manipulate product histories or tamper with supply-chain data. The authentication layer utilizing QR codes closes the loop between physical products and their digital identity, enabling consumers, retailers, and regulators to immediately verify authenticity and gain extensive insight into product provenance at the point of sale. The integration of anomaly detection algorithms seriously empowers the system to identify patterns of unusual distributions, unauthorized product diversions, and logistic disruptions and enables it for proactive intervention before fake products reach consumer markets. These combined technological layers not only prevent the insertion of counterfeits but also provide for continuous monitoring, early warnings, and insights for decision-making that support secure and efficient supply-chain operations. The real-world performance under testing and simulation of the system underlines its scalability and applicability across industries such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, electronics, apparel, food products, and luxury goods facing an ever-increasing threat of counterfeits. Beyond technical performance, the system meaningfully contributes to ensuring consumer safety, regulatory compliance, brand protection, and corporate responsibility. The framework ensures accountability among supply-chain stakeholders through end-to-end traceability offered, reducing their operational risk, facilitating more effective product recall procedures, and auditing mechanisms. In this way, consumers will be able to verify authenticity and make choices in a timely manner according to needs and preferences, building trust between brands and their customer base. The system also takes part in the global initiatives of digital transformation, together with the regulatory

frameworks put in place with a view to supply-chain transparency that evolves today, having focused on government mandates regarding serialization, digital labeling, and track-and-trace systems. While promising, the system realizes that any further implementation across global supply chains would have to take into consideration several challenges ranging from infrastructural costs to the standardization of data, interoperability among distributed networks, and continuous training of AI models with the aim of keeping pace with evolving techniques of counterfeiting. Scaling it up would need collaboration between industry, governments, and technology organizations to get it into a globally connected anti-counterfeiting ecosystem. With further development and integration of IoT sensors, NFC tags, tamper-sensitive smart packaging, biometric product signatures, and enhanced cryptographic models, the system could be totally autonomous, intelligent, and real-time in supply chain security infrastructure. This project evidences and confirms that AI, blockchain, and secure digital identity technologies taken together ensure a truly powerful and future-ready solution to problems related to counterfeiting. The system developed does not solve only authentication challenges of today but forms the base for a new generation of transparent, trustworthy, resilient supply chains. It represents a key contribution toward international efforts for protection of consumers, protection of brands, and the creation of a safer market where authenticity and quality are guaranteed in each stage of the journey a product follows.

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