

Impact of the Effectiveness of Pictorial Health Warnings on Cigarette Packs on the Behavioural Intention among Young Smokers in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to University Students

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Smoking poses multifaceted challenges in Sri Lanka, extending beyond health concerns to social and economic repercussions. This issue is particularly pronounced in middle-income countries, where smoking significantly burdens household finances. Our study explores the influence of pictorial health warnings on the behavioural intentions of young smokers in Sri Lanka, moving beyond the conventional health-centric view to encompass the broader societal and economic implications of smoking. Conducted with 397 participants selected via the snowball sampling method, this research involved a structured questionnaire distributed among university student smokers. This questionnaire aimed to gauge various aspects: the effectiveness of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs, general awareness of smoking risks, affective reactions to these warnings, their believability, and the subsequent behavioural intentions of the smokers. The results reveal a notable impact of pictorial health warnings on the behavioural intentions of young smokers in Sri Lanka. Notably, affective reactions emerged as having the most significant influence on these intentions. The study concludes with a discussion on theoretical and practical implications, shedding light on how pictorial health warnings might effectively encourage positive behavioural changes like smoking reduction or cessation.

Keywords: *Affective Reactions, Behavioural Intention, Believability, General Awareness, Pictorial Health Warning*