

The Impact of Private Label Characteristics on Purchase Intention of Private Label FMCG Products in Sri Lankan Supermarkets: A Study of the Mediating Effect of Supermarket Brand Loyalty

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In recent years, the global retail industry has witnessed a significant transformation in consumer behaviour and preferences, leading to an increased demand for Private Label Products (PLP). The Sri Lankan supermarket sector has also rapidly expanded, leading to increased competition. Retailers have responded by adopting innovative strategies, with Private Label Brands (PLBs) proving to be an effective way to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive edge. This research's purpose is to study the impact of private label characteristics (price, quality, features, shelf space allocation, and brand image) on the purchase intention of private label FMCG products in Sri Lankan supermarkets while considering the mediating effect of supermarket brand loyalty. The study is quantitative in nature, where a structured online questionnaire was distributed and collected data from 401 individuals who purchase PLPs (FMCG) from any supermarket chain in Sri Lanka. The convenience sampling method was adopted in data collection, and SPSS V.25 software was used for data analysis. The findings of the study demonstrate that as participants perceive private label characteristics more positively, they are more likely to exhibit strong supermarket brand loyalty and a higher intention to purchase PLPs (FMCG). Quality and price have been identified as the most influential characteristics. These findings contribute to retailers, consumers, and the academic community, enhancing their understanding of this study area. The influence of social media sustainability or demographic factors on customers' attitudes and consumer preferences towards PLPs (FMCG) in the Sri Lankan context has yet to be better understood.

Keywords: *Private Label Characteristics, Purchase Intention of Private Label FMCG Products, Sri Lankan Supermarkets, Supermarket Brand Loyalty.*