

The Impact of Brand Trust on Consumer Purchase Intention: The Moderating Effect of Price Sensitivity in the Organic Food Industry with Special Reference to Western Province Sri Lanka

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The organic food industry is witnessing rapid global growth as consumers increasingly prioritize health, environmental sustainability, and ethical consumption. However, in Sri Lanka, factors such as high prices and limited consumer trust pose challenges to market expansion. This study examines the impact of brand trust on consumer purchase intention within the organic food industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, focusing on the moderating effect of price sensitivity. Brand trust is analyzed through dimensions of brand benevolence, competence, and credibility. The study aims to fill gaps in the literature on consumer behavior in developing markets, offering insights for both marketers and policymakers.

A quantitative research approach was adopted using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 406 organic food consumers aged 15 and above in the Western Province. Convenience sampling was employed, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, simple regression, and multiple regression techniques via SPSS. The research framework is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior, incorporating price sensitivity as a moderating variable.

The results indicate that brand trust, including brand benevolence, competence, and credibility—significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Consumers who perceive an organic brand as trustworthy are more likely to purchase its products. However, price sensitivity moderates this relationship, weakening the positive effect of brand trust on purchase intention. As price sensitivity increases, the impact of brand trust on purchase behavior diminishes, suggesting that high prices act as a barrier to organic food consumption in Sri Lanka. These findings align with prior studies and

highlight the challenges consumers face when purchasing premium organic products in a developing economy.

This study is geographically limited to the Western Province, restricting the generalizability of findings to other regions or countries. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling may not fully represent the diverse demographics of Sri Lankan consumers. The dynamic nature of the organic food market and the challenges of accurately measuring price sensitivity also present limitations.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of brand trust, purchase intention, and price sensitivity in developing markets. Practically, it provides strategic insights for marketers and policymakers. To address price sensitivity, businesses can implement flexible pricing strategies, offer discounts, loyalty programs, and bundle deals to attract cost-conscious consumers without compromising profitability. Strengthening brand trust through transparent communication about sourcing, certifications, and sustainability practices can further enhance consumer confidence. Future research should explore additional moderate factors such as lifestyle and expand the geographic scope for broader relevance.

Keywords: *Brand Trust, Consumer Purchase Intention, Green Marketing, Moderating Effect, Organic Food Industry, Price Sensitivity, Sustainable Consumption*