

Purchase Intention of Consumers on Heirloom Rice Varieties in Sri Lanka; Special Reference to Galle District

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Sri Lanka is one of the precious islands which has been blessed by Mother Nature. Hence the agricultural sector was the major economic contributor during the hydraulic civilization. Since the ancient kingdoms, rice cultivation was not only an economic activity, but also a way of life for the people in Sri Lanka. According to the historical evidence, during the kingdom of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka introduced more than thousands of indigenous rice varieties to the world. In the 1940s the Department of Agriculture identified 150 varieties of traditional rice and released them to farmers to cultivate. Hence, at present only about 0.1% of traditional rice cultivations can be seen out of the total cultivated lands in Sri Lanka. These heirloom rice varieties contain higher nutritional values. Under this backdrop, it is prudent to answer the question of what factors affect the purchase intention of heirloom rice varieties by consumers, thereby influencing the payment behavior towards heirloom rice varieties in Sri Lanka. The general objective of this study is to identify the perception of consumers regarding purchase intention and payment behavior for heirloom rice varieties. Furthermore, the study attempts to investigate the relevance of the Theory of planned behavior on purchase intention and payment behavior of the consumers on heirloom rice varieties. The total population of Galle District was the target population of this study. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to generate a sample of 500. Data was collected using a questionnaire survey on purchase intention and payment behavior towards the heirloom rice varieties of Galle district residents. The response rate for the questionnaire was 92.6%. The operational methodology for this study is a factor analysis, which has three stages. The first stage is an Exploratory Factor Analysis to identify the major factors that influence the purchase intention and payment behavior. The second stage is a Confirmatory Factor Analysis to confirm the identified major factors from the Exploratory Factor Analysis. Finally, the Structural Equation Model is used to identify the relationships between the identified factors in the model. According to the Factor analysis, the study found that Attitudes, Normative Beliefs and Perceived Behavioral Control have influenced the perception of consumers to purchase the heirloom rice varieties. Moreover, the study revealed that Attitudes, Normative Beliefs and Perceived Behavioral Control have a significantly positive impact on Purchase Intention of heirloom rice varieties. Normative Beliefs have a 96% impact on Purchase Intention, and is the most crucial factor. Further, the study found that Purchase Intention influenced 73% on the Payment Behavior.

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