

**IMPACT OF WARNING LABELS IN TOBACCO INDUSTRY ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION  
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GAMPAHA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA)**

**P. G. D. S. Premalal<sup>1,\*</sup> and D.M.D. Chathurika<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale.*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihul Oya.*

\*Corresponding author (Email: sisarapremalal@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

The tobacco industry has faced increasing regulatory pressure to incorporate warning labels into cigarette packaging to reduce smoking rates and promote public health. This study examined the impact of warning labels on consumers' purchase intentions, focusing specifically on the Gampaha District of Sri Lanka. The research problem centers on understanding how various factors, such as product knowledge, brand expertise, materialism, and buying impulsiveness influence the effectiveness of warning labels in deterring cigarette purchases. The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between consumers' awareness of health warnings on cigarette packages and their subsequent purchase intentions. Additionally, this study investigates how consumers' knowledge of smoking's harmful effects, expertise in cigarette brands, materialistic values, and impulsive buying tendencies affect their responsiveness to these warning labels. A quantitative research methodology was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather primary data from male cigarette consumers in the Gampaha District. Using snowball sampling, a sample of 352 respondents was collected and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SMART PLS software to test the hypothesized relationships. The major findings indicate that brand expertise, buying impulsiveness, and materialism significantly and positively impact purchase intentions, whereas product knowledge does not show a significant relationship. Specifically, consumers with higher brand expertise and impulsiveness are more likely to overlook warning labels and continue purchasing cigarettes. Conversely, materialistic values correlate with a stronger intention to purchase, suggesting that materialism may counteract the deterrent effect of warning labels, highlighting the need for targeted public health campaigns that consider these behavioral factors. Regulatory bodies should adopt comprehensive strategies that not only focus on warning labels, but also address underlying consumer behaviors that diminish label effectiveness. The limitations of this study include the use of self-reported data and limited generalizability beyond Gampaha District. Future research should explore a broader range of demographics. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, health advocates, and marketers in designing interventions to reduce smoking rates and improve public health outcomes in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Cigarette purchase, Gampaha district, partial least squares (pls), smoking behavior, snowball sampling