

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR FOR VEGETARIAN MENU OPTIONS IN HIGH-END HOTELS IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

The demand for vegetarian foods has proliferated in recent decades, driven by an increased consumer interest in health, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations. However, research on consumer behavior regarding vegetarian food options in the hospitality industry is limited, particularly in high-end hotels in Sri Lanka. This study aims to identify the factors influencing consumer buying behavior concerning vegetarian menu options in 5-star hotels and examine their impact on purchase intentions. This study utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore how consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, motives, and past behavior influence buying behavior. The ultimate dependent variable of the study is consumer buying behavior, while purchase intention, a central factor in TPB, is considered a mediating variable. The study investigates how purchase intention mediates the relationship between these factors and buying behavior. Adopting a post-positivist philosophy, this study employed a quantitative research design following a deductive approach. Primary data were collected through an online survey of 150 consumers dining in 5-star hotels in the Western Province of Sri Lanka using the convenience sampling technique. Data were analyzed using SPSS 27, employing correlation analysis and stepwise regression tests. The Sobel test was conducted to examine the mediating effect of purchase intention. This study reveals that consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, consumer motives, and past behavior significantly influence consumer buying behavior, with purchase intention substantially mediating the relationship between TPB elements and buying behavior. Additionally, it was found that consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and past behavior had the strongest impact on buying behavior, with purchase intention effectively mediating these relationships. This study recommends that hoteliers analyze past purchasing trends, incorporate cultural influences, and offer a variety of vegetarian options that cater to dietary and cultural requirements. Furthermore, leveraging social media to highlight positive consumer experiences with vegetarian options; launching targeted promotional campaigns; and promoting the use of organic, local, and fresh ingredients can help hotels achieve a competitive advantage and attract a diverse customer base, including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests.

Keywords: Consumer buying behavior, consumer demand, purchase intentions, theory of planned behavior, vegetarian menu options