

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALIENT BELIEFS AND GENERAL ATTITUDES OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS FARM FISH CONSUMPTION – A STUDY BASED ON NEGOMBO DS DIVISION, NEGOMBO, SRI LANKA

W.L.V. Fernando* and G. Thivahary

Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Fish is a primary source of animal protein among the Sri Lankan citizens. Sources of fish protein can be wild-caught or farmed. The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) define the term aquaculture as the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, mollusc, crustaceans and aquatic plants. There are limited studies that explore consumption behaviour on fish consumption but neither explores specifically in Negombo DS division on Farm Fish consumption. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine the farm fish consumption behaviour in the Negombo Divisional Secretariat Division of Sri Lanka. This study used the Theory of Planned Behaviour as the base for the conceptual framework. It examined the relationship between salient beliefs and general attitudes of consumers towards farm fish consumption in particular. The convenient sampling method was used to select the respondents, and the total sample size was 115. Data collection was done in the form of a questionnaire survey. The interviews were conducted by visiting the supermarkets and local fish markets in Negombo DS Division. The questionnaire uses the 7-point Likert scale and semantic differential scales adopted from the previous literature. The SPSS and MS Excel were used to analyse the constructs. This study employs the methods of descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to analyse the collected data. The measures used to evaluate the constructs are adopted from past studies. The study concludes that salient beliefs of consumers, including sensory, health, convenience, and price beliefs, significantly affect consumers' general attitudes towards farm fish consumption. Among them, price consciousness had a negative effect on general attitude. It is recommended that the relevant authorities focus on communicating the positive aspects of sensory attributes, health benefits, convenience beliefs, and competitive pricing to influence consumer attitudes positively. Further, it is advisable to explore pricing strategies to make farmed fish products more competitive. This may involve identifying cost-effective production methods, promoting cost transparency, improving value addition or even offering promotional pricing to attract consumers.

Keywords: Aquaculture, Farm fish consumption, Theory of planned behaviour

**Corresponding author: rihanafernandez123@gmail.com*