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Influence of Consumer Economic Behavior and Brand Perception on Purchasing Decisions in the Honey Industry: Basis for Brand Positioning Framework

Cai Yaxiao
Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas

Abstract

The expanding honey market requires producers to differentiate their brands while responding to consumers' economic considerations, quality expectations, and concerns regarding product credibility. This study examined the relationships of consumer economic behavior and brand perception with purchasing decisions in the honey industry and used the findings as the basis for developing a brand positioning framework. A descriptive quantitative-correlational design was employed among 400 honey consumers in Qingdao, Shandong Province, China. Data were gathered through a researcher-developed four-point questionnaire measuring price sensitivity, spending habits, perceived value, brand image, product quality, brand trust, brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior. Weighted means and rankings were used for descriptive analysis, while Spearman's rank-order correlation and regression analysis were applied for inferential analysis. Respondents generally reported favorable consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions. All tested relationships among the study variables were positive and statistically significant. In the reported regression model, product quality, brand trust, brand selection, and repeat-purchase behavior significantly predicted the purchasing-decision outcome, whereas brand image and purchase experience did not demonstrate significant independent contributions. The resulting framework emphasizes quality assurance, credible brand practices, deliberate brand selection, value communication, and customer-retention mechanisms as central elements of strategic positioning. The findings provide managerial guidance for honey enterprises seeking to strengthen competitiveness, consumer trust, and repeat purchasing.

Keywords: *consumer economic behavior; brand perception; purchasing decisions; brand positioning; honey industry; strategic marketing*

1. Introduction

The honey industry operates at the intersection of food production, health-oriented consumption, agricultural enterprise, and branded retail. Honey is valued not only as a natural sweetener but also as a product associated with nutrition, wellness, authenticity, and traditional consumption. These attributes create commercial opportunities for honey producers and marketers while introducing strategic challenges because consumers must evaluate products that differ in price, origin, quality claims, certification, packaging, and brand credibility. As competition increases, honey enterprises can no longer depend exclusively on intrinsic product characteristics. They must understand how consumers assess economic value, form perceptions of brands, and translate these evaluations into purchasing decisions.

Consumer purchasing behavior in the honey market is shaped partly by economic considerations. Price sensitivity determines whether consumers compare competing products, respond to discounts, or accept premium prices for honey described as organic, pure, locally produced, or certified. Spending habits influence the frequency and timing of purchases, particularly when consumers allocate limited household resources across alternative food products. Perceived value extends economic evaluation beyond price by incorporating the benefits consumers believe they receive, including nutritional value, perceived health advantages, product authenticity, ethical sourcing, and confidence in the producer.

In honey purchasing, price sensitivity can shape whether consumers compare brands, delay purchases, or accept a premium for a product that appears to offer greater value. Evidence from adjacent financial-decision contexts shows that economic capacity and evaluative attitudes jointly structure choice: monthly salary and attitude toward investment predicted investment decisions in one Philippine study (Lantin-Magana et al., 2026), while awareness and policy perceptions were associated with saving and investing but not routine spending in another (Espelita et al., 2025). Consumer economic behavior therefore cannot be explained through affordability alone; consumers also evaluate whether expected benefits justify the financial sacrifice.

Perceived value is especially important when honey is positioned as a health-oriented or premium food product. Strategic research in adjacent consumer settings shows that value can be strengthened through consultation, bundling, convenience, risk reduction, and service differentiation (Teodosio et al., 2025). A hospitality value-innovation design likewise proposes that purposeful fit and customization can increase perceived value beyond simple feature accumulation (Benosa et al., 2026). Applied to honey, these insights support a value-based decision process in which consumers compare monetary cost with anticipated functional, psychological, and ethical benefits.

Economic behavior does not operate independently of brand perception. Brand perception represents the beliefs, impressions, and expectations that consumers associate with a particular brand. Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model explains that brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and loyalty contribute to brand value. Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity Model similarly emphasizes that consumer knowledge and associations determine responses to branded products. Within the honey industry, these concepts are particularly relevant because consumers may be unable to evaluate purity, authenticity, or production quality through immediate observation. Brand image, perceived product quality, and brand trust therefore function as informational signals that reduce uncertainty.

Brand image reflects the meanings consumers attach to a honey product through its name, visual identity, reputation, packaging, geographic origin, and marketing communication. Product quality refers to consumers' assessment of the honey's purity, taste, safety, consistency, nutritional value, and conformity with product claims. Brand trust concerns confidence that the producer will consistently provide reliable information and acceptable quality. Trust is especially important in markets affected by concerns regarding adulteration, misleading claims, or uncertain product origin.

Trust in a honey brand may be strengthened when credibility is made visible through transparent information, recognizable quality assurances, responsible sourcing, and responsive support. Strategic retail studies in the Philippines similarly identify trust and compliance as durable assets under digital disruption (Atento & Atento, 2025) and emphasize visible authenticity cues, transparent sourcing, and reliable customer support as mechanisms for reducing marketplace uncertainty (Atento & Atento, 2026). Branding in the honey industry therefore involves more than visual presentation; it requires credible evidence regarding product quality, origin, safety, and production practices.

Purchasing decisions represent the behavioral outcome of these economic and perceptual evaluations. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control contribute to behavioral intentions and subsequent actions (Ajzen, 1991). The Buyer Decision Process Model describes purchasing as a sequence involving need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase assessment (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Applied to honey products, these models suggest that consumers evaluate affordability, perceived benefits, brand credibility, product quality, and prior experience before selecting or repurchasing a brand.

Although consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions have been studied separately, comparatively limited attention has been given to how these constructs operate together among honey consumers in Qingdao, Shandong Province. Existing studies have addressed price sensitivity, health consciousness, authenticity, product quality, sustainability, and traceability in different national contexts, but the strategic integration of these factors remains underexplored. This gap has practical significance because producers and marketers require evidence concerning which attributes should receive priority in pricing, product development, communication, certification, and customer-retention strategies.

A brand-positioning framework based on consumer assessments can help enterprises determine whether they should compete primarily through affordability, perceived value, quality assurance, trust, differentiation, or repeat-purchase reinforcement. Such a framework is relevant to enterprise strategy because it translates consumer-level evidence into positioning decisions intended to strengthen competitiveness and market sustainability.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the influence of consumer economic behavior and brand perception on purchasing decisions in the honey industry and to use the findings as the basis for a brand positioning framework. Specifically, it sought to:

1. assess consumer economic behavior in terms of price sensitivity, spending habits, and perceived value;
2. evaluate brand perception in terms of brand image, product quality, and brand trust;
3. determine purchasing decisions in terms of brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior;
4. test the significant relationships among consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions;
5. determine the significant statistical influence of the reported predictors on the purchasing-decision outcome; and
6. develop a brand positioning framework for honey industry enterprises and marketers.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Consumer Economic Behavior, Price Sensitivity, and Perceived Value

Consumer economic behavior concerns how individuals allocate limited financial resources, compare alternatives, and evaluate the benefits expected from a purchase. Consumer Behavior Theory maintains that purchasing decisions emerge from an interaction of personal, psychological, social, and economic factors, including income, price perception, and perceived utility (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). The Consumer Decision Model similarly explains that consumers evaluate available information and product alternatives before making purchase and post-purchase judgments (Engel et al., 1995). In the honey market, these processes are reflected in price sensitivity, spending habits, and perceived value.

Price performs two potentially conflicting functions in honey purchasing. It may act as a financial constraint, particularly among consumers with limited purchasing capacity, but it may also be interpreted in relation to the utility and assurance attached to the product. Evidence from Philippine investment decisions indicates that income capacity can shape the likelihood of acting on favorable attitudes (Lantin-Magana et al., 2026). In a retail SME context, Teodosio et al. (2025) illustrated how consultation, bundling, transparency, and risk reduction can shift competition away from price alone toward customer utility. Honey consumers may therefore reject a high price when it appears unsupported, yet accept it when the product offers credible and relevant value.

Perceived value extends economic evaluation beyond affordability. Consumers may accept higher prices when they believe honey provides corresponding nutritional, health, safety, environmental, or authenticity benefits. Teodosio et al. (2025) framed perceived value as the result of a coherent customer-centered proposition that combines service, guidance, convenience, and risk reduction. Benosa et al. (2026) similarly proposed that fit and customization can differentiate an offering from standardized, price-led alternatives. Consumers therefore evaluate the balance between financial sacrifice and the functional or symbolic benefits associated with a product.

Product knowledge and personal meaning can change the economic interpretation of a honey purchase. Consumers who associate honey with wellness, responsible production, family use, or cultural preference may view the purchase as more than an ordinary food expense. Atento and Espelita (2025) showed how community values can be translated into consumer triggers such as trust, identity affirmation, perceived competence, and credibility. This value-to-choice logic suggests that the same honey product may be evaluated differently across demographic and market contexts, depending on which benefits and meanings consumers prioritize.

2.2 Brand Image, Product Quality, and Brand Trust

Brand perception comprises the beliefs, impressions, and expectations consumers associate with a brand. Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model identifies brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty as major components of brand value. Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity Model likewise proposes that consumer responses depend on the knowledge and meanings attached to a brand. In the honey industry, brand perception is particularly important because purity, safety, origin, and production quality cannot always be evaluated directly before purchase.

Brand image provides consumers with a simplified basis for differentiating among competing products. It may be formed through brand reputation, visual identity, packaging, product origin, certifications, advertising, and prior experience. Atento and Espelita (2025) conceptualized consumer-centered marketing as a translation of stakeholder values into trust, identity, credibility, and related choice triggers. A strategic case analysis of Mercury Drug likewise identified nationwide reach, consumer trust, and regulatory compliance as enduring reputational assets (Atento & Atento, 2025). A recognizable image may therefore reduce uncertainty when it is supported by credible and consistent brand conduct.

Product quality is a functional component of brand perception. In the honey market, quality may refer to purity, taste, consistency, nutritional value, safety, and conformity with product claims. Adjacent evidence from quality-management research indicates that formalized quality-system implementation can significantly predict service quality and compliance outcomes (Gamasan & Atento, 2026). Although the operational setting differs from food retail, the underlying implication is relevant: favorable quality perceptions are more defensible when supported by repeatable processes, documented standards, and consistent delivery.

Brand trust reflects confidence that a producer will provide consistent quality, accurate information, and reliable product claims. This dimension is especially significant because consumers may have limited ability to verify purity or sourcing before purchase. In a study of college-bound learners, brand trust emerged as the strongest predictor of behavioral intention, exceeding the contribution of social-media usage (Espelita et al., 2026). Strategic retail analysis also positions trust and visible authenticity assurance as differentiators under marketplace uncertainty (Atento & Atento, 2026). Trust can therefore reduce perceived risk and stabilize preference even when competing offers are available.

Transparency supports both brand trust and quality perception. Clear information about production location, certification, sourcing, product attributes, and handling allows consumers to judge whether brand claims are credible. Atento and Atento (2026) emphasized that authenticity must be operationalized through visible cues, transparent sourcing, and responsive customer support, while Atento and Atento (2025) linked compliance credibility with the strategic resilience of a major retail brand. Honey branding should therefore not be treated merely as aesthetic differentiation; it should provide accessible evidence supporting claims concerning purity, origin, production methods, and ethical practices.

2.3 Brand Selection, Purchase Experience, and Repeat-Purchase Behavior

Purchasing decisions represent the outcome of consumers' economic and perceptual evaluations. The Theory of Planned Behavior proposes that behavior is influenced by attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and social expectations (Ajzen, 1991). The Buyer Decision Process Model describes purchasing as a sequence involving need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase assessment (Kotler & Keller, 2016). These frameworks are relevant because honey consumers frequently compare price, quality claims, health benefits, brand reputation, and origin before making a selection.

Brand selection refers to the consumer's choice of one honey brand over competing alternatives. Consumer-centered marketing research suggests that choices become more likely when brand communication resonates with underlying values and activates trust, identity, and credibility cues (Atento & Espelita, 2025). Empirical evidence from higher-education marketing also demonstrates that brand trust can be a stronger predictor of behavioral intention than digital exposure alone (Espelita et al., 2026). Brand selection therefore depends on both comparative evaluation and perceived risk reduction.

Purchase experience encompasses interaction with the product and its selling environment, including accessibility, product information, convenience, seller responsiveness, and satisfaction with the purchasing process. Digital channels have expanded the points through which consumers search, compare, select, and obtain products. In Philippine retail, effective omnichannel integration has been framed as a combination of unified information, consistent service, and frictionless fulfillment that supports satisfaction and retention (Atento & Atento, 2026). Customer-journey analysis further shows how convenience and reduced friction can create utility at purchase, delivery, and use stages (Benosa et al., 2026).

Post-purchase evaluation determines whether the consumer develops satisfaction, loyalty, or switching behavior. Repeat purchasing becomes more likely when product quality, information, service, and brand promises remain consistent across transactions. Teodosio et al. (2025) argued that customer-centric value innovation can strengthen loyalty and brand meaning when digital, service, and sustainability elements are integrated coherently. Atento and Atento (2026) similarly identified omnichannel consistency and authenticity assurance as mechanisms supporting customer satisfaction and retention. Customer retention therefore depends on maintaining quality and trust while providing sufficient value to discourage switching.

2.4 Authenticity, Traceability, Health Value, and Strategic Brand Positioning

Authenticity is a central strategic issue in the honey industry. Consumers may be unable to determine whether honey is pure, adulterated, organic, locally produced, or accurately labeled through visual inspection alone. This information asymmetry increases the importance of traceability, certification, and brand credibility. Research in regulated and platform-exposed retail settings shows that trust, compliance, and authenticity assurance become strategic assets when consumers face uncertainty (Atento & Atento, 2025; Atento & Atento, 2026). Honey enterprises must therefore make credible verification accessible rather than expecting consumers to rely solely on appearance or promotional claims.

Traceability functions as both an informational and a positioning mechanism. Information concerning floral source, place of production, harvest, certification, and producer identity can differentiate legitimate products from uncertain alternatives. Atento and Atento (2026) emphasized that authenticity cues and transparent sourcing must be visible throughout the customer journey if they are to reduce marketplace risk. Such information allows honey enterprises to position their brands around accountability, responsible production, and credible differentiation rather than relying only on price competition.

Health value represents another basis for positioning. Honey is often perceived as a natural, nutritional, or wellness-oriented product rather than merely as a sweetener. Strategic value-innovation research indicates that differentiated attributes are most persuasive when they are integrated into a coherent customer value proposition rather than presented as isolated add-ons (Teodosio et al., 2025). Geographic, cultural, and community meanings may also strengthen differentiation because consumer-centered marketing depends on alignment between brand communication and the values audiences use to evaluate choices (Atento & Espelita, 2025).

For enterprise strategy, successful positioning must integrate functional, economic, and symbolic value. A honey brand may compete through affordability, but price-based positioning alone can be imitated and may weaken quality perceptions. A more defensible position may combine quality assurance, verified authenticity, health-oriented value, transparent information, and reliable customer experience. The strategic challenge is to identify the combination that corresponds most closely with consumer priorities and purchasing behavior.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature indicates that honey purchasing can be interpreted through an interconnected set of economic, perceptual, and experiential considerations. Economic capacity and attitudes influence whether consumers can act on favorable evaluations (Espelita et al., 2025; Lantin-Magana et al., 2026), while perceived value is strengthened when an offering combines credible benefits, utility, convenience, and risk reduction (Teodosio et al., 2025; Benosa et al., 2026). Brand image can facilitate recognition, but trust and visible authenticity assurance provide stronger protection against uncertainty (Atento & Espelita, 2025; Espelita et al., 2026). Purchase experience and channel consistency then contribute to satisfaction and retention (Atento & Atento, 2026). These related mechanisms support examining economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions within one analytical framework.

The literature is geographically dispersed and frequently examines only selected aspects of honey consumption. Some studies focus on willingness to pay or price, while others emphasize health awareness, authenticity, traceability, product origin, or brand image. Relatively limited evidence integrates consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and multiple purchasing-related variables within a single empirical analysis. The present study responds by examining price sensitivity, spending habits, perceived value, brand image, product quality, brand trust, brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior within one analytical framework and by translating the observed relationships into a brand positioning framework relevant to honey enterprises.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions in the honey industry. The descriptive component determined respondents' assessments of the principal variables, while the correlational component examined statistical relationships among the measures. Regression analysis identified the variables that significantly predicted the purchasing-decision outcome. Because the study was cross-sectional and nonexperimental, the findings were interpreted as associations and statistical predictions rather than causal effects.

3.2 Respondents and Research Setting

The respondents were consumers of honey products in Qingdao, Shandong Province, China. Eligible respondents were required to have purchased honey at least once during the six months preceding the survey. The final statistical dataset comprised 400 valid responses. Honey consumers were approached through purchasing locations that included supermarkets, local markets, health stores, and specialty shops.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling restricted participation to qualified honey consumers who satisfied the six-month purchase criterion. Quota sampling distributed respondents across the identified purchasing locations to obtain participation from consumers using different retail channels. The final sample of 400 exceeded the conventional minimum of 384 commonly used for large or indeterminate populations; however, because nonprobability sampling was employed, the sample was not presented as a probability-based representation of all honey consumers in Qingdao.

3.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire composed of 45 statements and a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1, Strongly Disagree, to 4, Strongly Agree. The measures covered price sensitivity, spending habits, perceived value, brand image, product quality, brand trust, brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior. The consumer economic behavior measures were informed by Consumer Behavior Theory and the Consumer Decision Model. The brand perception measures were based on the Brand Equity Model and the Customer-Based Brand Equity Model. The purchasing-related measures were informed by the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Buyer Decision Process Model.

The draft instrument underwent content validation by specialists in marketing, research methodology, and the honey industry. A pilot test involving 30 respondents was then conducted to assess item clarity and internal consistency. All nine measures obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding .70, indicating acceptable to good internal consistency.

Table 1. *Reliability of the Research Instrument*

Construct and measure	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Consumer economic behavior			
Price sensitivity	5	.837	Good
Spending habits	5	.720	Acceptable
Perceived value	5	.870	Good
Brand perception			
Brand image	5	.828	Good
Product quality	5	.895	Good
Brand trust	5	.791	Acceptable
Purchasing-related measures			
Brand selection	5	.878	Good
Purchase experience	5	.834	Good
Repeat-purchase behavior	5	.793	Acceptable

3.5 Data-Gathering Procedure

Following the review of literature and development of the theoretical framework, the researcher prepared the questionnaire and submitted it for expert validation. Revisions were incorporated before the instrument was pilot-tested among 30 honey consumers. The final questionnaire was administered in printed and online formats. Printed questionnaires were distributed through supermarkets, local markets, health stores, and other honey-purchasing locations, while the online version was administered through an electronic survey platform. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, participation requirements, confidentiality safeguards, and voluntary nature. Completed responses were retrieved, encoded, and examined for completeness and validity before analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

Weighted means, composite means, and ranks summarized respondents' assessments of the nine measures. Mean scores were interpreted as follows: 3.50-4.00, Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49, Agree; 1.50-2.49, Disagree; and 1.00-1.49, Strongly Disagree. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test assessed normality. Since the reported probability values were below .05, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to test relationships among consumer economic behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions. Regression analysis determined whether brand image, product quality, brand trust, brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior significantly predicted the purchasing-decision outcome. Statistical significance was evaluated at alpha = .05.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas Research Ethics Review Committee before data collection. The approval letter was dated October 23, 2025, under RERC Code A1 2025-524. Respondents received information concerning the study's purpose and procedures and provided informed consent before participating. Participation was voluntary, no personally identifying information was collected, and responses were reported only in aggregated form. Research data were maintained securely and used exclusively for academic purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

The statistical analyses were based on 400 valid cases reflected in the final statistical outputs. The original descriptive tables were consolidated to avoid repetitive item-by-item presentation while preserving the principal findings.

4.1 Consumer Economic Behavior

Consumer economic behavior was examined in terms of price sensitivity, spending habits, and perceived value. As summarized in Table 2, all three measures received an Agree interpretation, with an overall composite mean of 3.20. Price sensitivity obtained the highest mean at 3.21, followed by spending habits at 3.20 and perceived value at 3.18.

Table 2. *Descriptive Results for the Principal Study Variables*

Construct and indicator	Composite mean	Interpretation	Rank
Consumer economic behavior	**3.20**	**Agree**	**-**
Price sensitivity	3.21	Agree	1
Spending habits	3.20	Agree	2
Perceived value	3.18	Agree	3
Brand perception	**3.17**	**Agree**	**-**
Brand image	3.20	Agree	1
Product quality	3.16	Agree	2.5
Brand trust	3.16	Agree	2.5
Purchasing decisions	**3.17**	**Agree**	**-**
Brand selection	3.18	Agree	1
Purchase experience	3.17	Agree	2
Repeat-purchase behavior	3.16	Agree	3

Scale interpretation: 3.50-4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49 = Agree; 1.50-2.49 = Disagree; 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree.

The price-sensitivity results indicate that respondents actively evaluated the financial implications of purchasing honey. The highest-rated statement was comparing honey prices across brands before purchasing (M = 3.25). Price as a primary consideration obtained 3.24, while the influence of discounts obtained 3.22. The willingness to pay premium prices for organic-certified honey received the lowest price-sensitivity mean of 3.14. Although still interpreted as Agree, certification alone may not automatically justify a substantial price premium without additional assurance concerning purity, quality, nutritional value, or authenticity.

Spending habits were affected by situational and promotional factors. Seasonal demand, including holidays and festivities, received the highest mean of 3.25. Allocating a specific budget for honey purchases obtained 3.23, while stocking up during sales received 3.20. The lowest-rated statement was prioritizing honey over other sweeteners (M = 3.16), indicating that honey remains one option among several substitute products.

Perceived value was shaped primarily by health and brand-related considerations. Viewing honey purchases as an investment in health obtained the highest mean of 3.22, followed by the belief that brand reputation enhances honey's perceived worth at 3.20. Packaging as an influence on perceived value received the lowest mean of 3.14. Consumers therefore assigned greater importance to health-related benefits and brand credibility than to packaging alone.

4.2 Brand Perception

Brand perception obtained an overall composite mean of 3.17. Brand image ranked first with a mean of 3.20, while product quality and brand trust were tied at 3.16. Within brand image, respondents gave the highest ratings to recognizing preferred brand packaging and to the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives, both with means of 3.22. Positive market reputation received 3.20, while alignment between brand messaging and personal values received the lowest mean of 3.15.

Product quality obtained a composite mean of 3.16. Trustworthiness of product claims such as purity and natural ingredients received the highest rating (M = 3.22), followed by correspondence between actual flavor and brand descriptions (M = 3.20). The lowest-rated indicator was consistency of product quality across batches (M = 3.11). This result identifies consistency as an important strategic concern because variations in taste, color, texture, or other characteristics can weaken brand reliability.

Brand trust also obtained a composite mean of 3.16. Ethical sourcing received the highest rating at 3.22, followed by willingness to recommend the brand at 3.21. Accuracy of product information, trust in certifications, and consistency in fulfilling brand promises each received 3.13. Consumers valued ethical practices but remained comparatively cautious about documentary claims, certifications, and consistent brand performance.

4.3 Purchasing Decisions

Purchasing decisions obtained an overall composite mean of 3.17. Brand selection ranked first at 3.18, followed by purchase experience at 3.17 and repeat-purchase behavior at 3.16. For brand selection, online reviews received the highest mean at 3.21, followed by loyalty to preferred brands at 3.19. The findings indicate that consumers combined deliberate brand preference with openness to alternatives and used online reviews as information concerning product quality and credibility.

Purchase experience received a composite mean of 3.17. In-store displays and satisfactory service through digital platforms received the highest means at 3.18, followed by convenience across purchasing channels at 3.17. The close distribution of scores suggests that consumers evaluated the purchasing process through both physical and digital channels, with continuing room to strengthen convenience, employee knowledge, digital service quality, and overall customer experience.

Repeat-purchase behavior obtained a composite mean of 3.16. Looking for promotions when buying preferred brands received the highest mean at 3.19. Positive experiences increasing repurchase intention and maintaining alternative brand options both received 3.17. Repeat purchasing was therefore influenced by both loyalty and continued economic evaluation. Customer retention depends on maintaining quality and trust while providing sufficient value to discourage switching.

4.4 Relationships Among Consumer Economic Behavior, Brand Perception, and Purchasing Decisions

Consumer Economic Behavior and Brand Perception

All correlations between consumer economic behavior and brand perception were positive and statistically significant at $p < .001$, with coefficients ranging from .613 to .798.

Table 3. *Relationships Between Consumer Economic Behavior and Brand Perception*

Economic-behavior variable	Brand-perception outcome	Spearman's rho	p
Price sensitivity	Brand image	.771	< .001
Price sensitivity	Product quality	.715	< .001
Price sensitivity	Brand trust	.621	< .001
Spending habits	Brand image	.781	< .001
Spending habits	Product quality	.756	< .001

Economic-behavior variable	Brand-perception outcome	Spearman's rho	p
Spending habits	Brand trust	.613	< .001
Perceived value	Brand image	.798	< .001
Perceived value	Product quality	.790	< .001
Perceived value	Brand trust	.641	< .001

The strongest relationship occurred between perceived value and brand image (rho = .798), followed by perceived value and product quality (rho = .790). Spending habits were strongly associated with brand image (rho = .781), while price sensitivity was strongly associated with brand image (rho = .771). These results indicate that consumers who were more attentive to price, spending, and value also tended to make stronger evaluations of image, quality, and trust. Economic consciousness did not imply indifference toward branding; consumers appeared to use brand information to determine whether a honey product offered acceptable value.

Consumer Economic Behavior and Purchasing Decisions

All dimensions of consumer economic behavior were positively and significantly associated with brand selection, purchase experience, and repeat-purchase behavior.

Table 4. *Relationships Between Consumer Economic Behavior and Purchasing Decisions*

Economic-behavior variable	Purchasing outcome	Spearman's rho	p
Price sensitivity	Brand selection	.685	< .001
Price sensitivity	Purchase experience	.672	< .001
Price sensitivity	Repeat-purchase behavior	.680	< .001
Spending habits	Brand selection	.730	< .001
Spending habits	Purchase experience	.722	< .001
Spending habits	Repeat-purchase behavior	.703	< .001
Perceived value	Brand selection	.757	< .001
Perceived value	Purchase experience	.788	< .001
Perceived value	Repeat-purchase behavior	.739	< .001

The strongest association was between perceived value and purchase experience (rho = .788). Perceived value was also strongly related to brand selection (rho = .757) and repeat-purchase behavior (rho = .739). Spending habits were strongly associated with brand selection (rho = .730), purchase experience (rho = .722), and repeat-purchase behavior (rho = .703). The positive direction of the price-sensitivity relationships suggests that consumers who carefully evaluated prices were not necessarily less likely to purchase. Rather, price consciousness was incorporated into brand comparison, purchase evaluation, and repurchasing decisions.

Brand Perception and Purchasing Decisions

The relationships between brand perception and purchasing decisions were uniformly positive and significant at $p < .001$, with coefficients ranging from .740 to .836.

Table 5. *Relationships Between Brand Perception and Purchasing Decisions*

Brand-perception variable	Purchasing outcome	Spearman's rho	p
Brand image	Brand selection	.836	< .001
Brand image	Purchase experience	.788	< .001
Brand image	Repeat-purchase behavior	.765	< .001
Product quality	Brand selection	.821	< .001

Brand-perception variable	Purchasing outcome	Spearman's rho	p
Product quality	Purchase experience	.802	< .001
Product quality	Repeat-purchase behavior	.753	< .001
Brand trust	Brand selection	.800	< .001
Brand trust	Purchase experience	.791	< .001
Brand trust	Repeat-purchase behavior	.740	< .001

The strongest correlation was between brand image and brand selection (rho = .836). Product quality was also strongly associated with brand selection (rho = .821), while brand trust and brand selection produced a coefficient of .800. Product quality had a strong relationship with purchase experience (rho = .802). Correlations with repeat-purchase behavior remained substantial but were lower than those involving brand selection, suggesting that initial brand choice may be influenced by image and expectations, whereas continued purchasing requires repeated confirmation of quality, trustworthiness, and value.

4.5 Predictors of the Purchasing-Decision Outcome and Brand Positioning Framework

Regression analysis identified the variables that significantly predicted the purchasing-decision outcome. Table 6 presents the reported standardized coefficients.

Table 6. *Predictors of the Purchasing-Decision Outcome*

Predictor	Standardized beta	p	Interpretation
Brand image	-.010	.844	Not significant
Product quality	.121	.043	Significant
Brand trust	.245	< .001	Significant
Brand selection	.164	.003	Significant
Purchase experience	.104	.060	Not significant
Repeat-purchase behavior	.327	< .001	Significant

Reported constant = .146. Significance was evaluated at alpha = .05.

Repeat-purchase behavior was the strongest predictor of the purchasing-decision outcome (beta = .327, $p < .001$), followed by brand trust (beta = .245, $p < .001$), brand selection (beta = .164, $p = .003$), and product quality (beta = .121, $p = .043$). The result gives customer retention a central position in the proposed enterprise strategy. Brand trust indicates that confidence in product information, sourcing, certification, and brand promises contributes directly to purchasing decisions. Product quality confirms the importance of reliable performance and credible quality claims, while brand selection shows the value of deliberate consumer preference.

Brand image did not demonstrate a significant independent contribution (beta = -.010, $p = .844$), and purchase experience was likewise nonsignificant at the .05 level (beta = .104, $p = .060$). These results do not indicate that image and experience are irrelevant; rather, their independent contributions were not statistically significant after the other predictors were considered.

Based on the combined descriptive, correlational, and regression findings, the brand positioning framework integrates four strategic priorities: quality assurance; trust architecture; deliberate brand selection; and retention and repurchase reinforcement. Consumer economic behavior provides the market context within which these priorities operate. Brand image, packaging information, and purchase experience remain supporting capabilities of visibility, differentiation, and customer interaction.

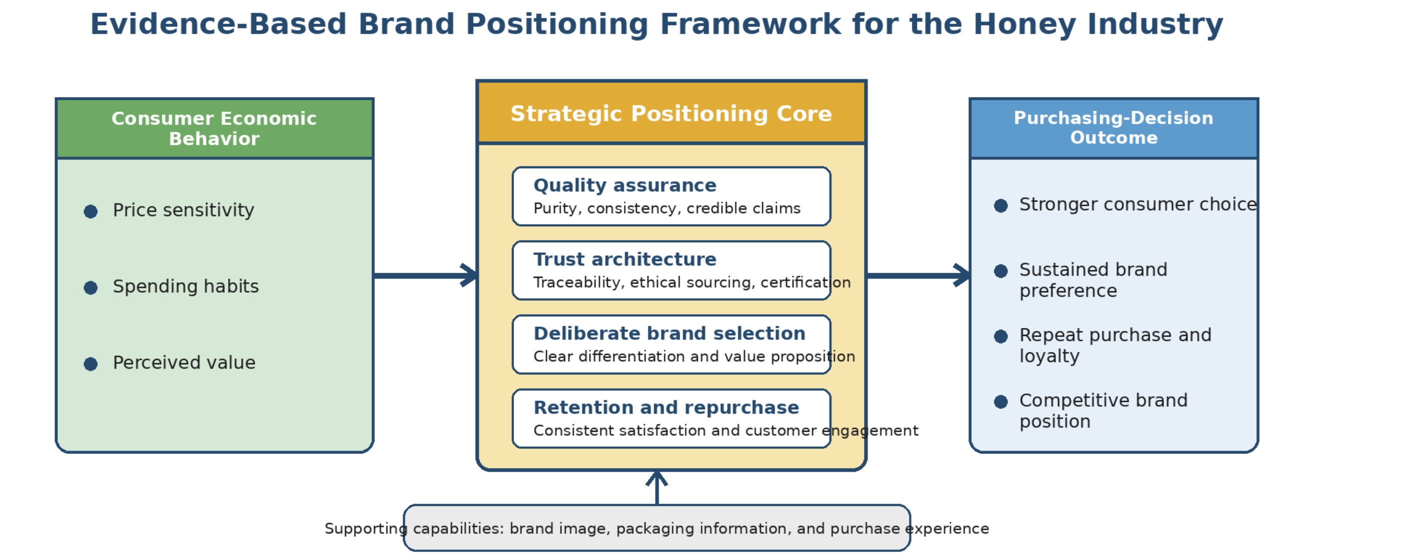

Figure 1. Evidence-Based Brand Positioning Framework for the Honey Industry

4.6 Discussion

The findings indicate that honey purchasing is neither purely price-driven nor purely image-driven. Respondents were attentive to price comparisons, discounts, seasonal purchasing, and perceived value, but they also evaluated health benefits, product quality, sourcing practices, brand reputation, and prior experience. This combination supports the view that consumer behavior involves an assessment of both economic sacrifice and expected benefits.

Price sensitivity ranked highest within consumer economic behavior, but perceived value produced some of the strongest correlations with brand perception and purchasing outcomes. Consumers may compare prices carefully while still accepting a product when health value, quality, authenticity, or brand credibility justifies the cost. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that economic capacity conditions decision behavior (Lantin-Magana et al., 2026) and with strategic models in which utility, guidance, convenience, and risk reduction shift competition away from price alone (Teodosio et al., 2025).

The importance assigned to honey as an investment in health indicates that producers may strengthen value perceptions by clearly communicating legitimate nutritional and product attributes. However, the comparatively lower willingness to pay a premium for organic certification suggests that certification should be accompanied by understandable evidence of quality, authenticity, and consumer benefit. This interpretation aligns with strategic retail evidence emphasizing visible authenticity assurance and transparent sourcing (Atento & Atento, 2026) and with quality-management evidence showing that systematic implementation contributes to service quality and compliance (Gamasan & Atento, 2026).

Brand image obtained the highest descriptive mean among the brand-perception variables and demonstrated strong correlations with brand selection and purchase experience. Nevertheless, it did not independently predict the purchasing-decision outcome. This result distinguishes brand salience from behavioral contribution. A visible and recognizable image may help a brand enter the consumer's consideration set, but image alone may be insufficient when consumers require assurance concerning product purity, quality, and sourcing.

Product quality and brand trust were significant predictors. This is especially relevant because consumers may have difficulty independently verifying authenticity before purchase. Quality consistency, traceability, transparent labeling, and accurate claims reduce uncertainty and provide reasons to remain with a brand. Comparable evidence shows that quality-system implementation supports consistent service and compliance (Gamasan & Atento, 2026), while brand trust can independently predict behavioral intention (Espelita et al., 2026). The findings therefore support a positioning strategy in which trust is operationalized through verifiable quality, transparent information, and consistent performance.

Repeat-purchase behavior emerged as the strongest predictor, emphasizing the strategic value of retention. Enterprise performance in the honey market should not be assessed solely through initial sales or brand awareness. A stronger strategic indicator is whether consumers repeatedly select the product after evaluating its actual quality and value. Promotions may support repeat purchasing, but they should reinforce rather than substitute for consistent performance.

Purchase experience was positively correlated with economic behavior and brand perception but was not a significant independent predictor. Convenient channels, displays, digital service, and employee knowledge remain useful operational supports, although their contribution may be overshadowed by quality, trust, brand preference, and purchasing continuity. Overall, the findings support a quality-and-trust-centered positioning strategy reinforced by value communication and customer retention.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

Consumers demonstrated favorable economic behavior toward honey products. Price sensitivity received the highest assessment, followed closely by spending habits and perceived value. Consumers compared prices, considered promotions and seasonal demand, and evaluated honey partly through its perceived health value. Honey purchases were therefore shaped by both financial considerations and expected benefits.

Brand perception was favorable. Brand image received the highest assessment, while product quality and brand trust obtained similar evaluations. Consumers recognized honey brands through packaging, reputation, and social responsibility initiatives, but improvements were required in product consistency, information accuracy, certification reliability, and fulfillment of brand promises. Positive visibility alone was insufficient without credible quality and trust signals.

Purchasing decisions were generally favorable. Consumers deliberately selected brands, considered online reviews, and evaluated both physical and digital channels. Repeat-purchase behavior remained sensitive to promotions, prior experiences, and the availability of alternatives. Honey enterprises must therefore sustain consumer preference beyond the initial transaction.

Consumer economic behavior was positively and significantly related to brand perception and purchasing decisions. Perceived value produced several of the strongest relationships, demonstrating that decisions depended not only on affordability but also on whether honey was perceived to provide sufficient health, quality, and brand-related benefits.

Brand image, product quality, and brand trust were positively and significantly associated with purchasing decisions. The regression findings identified repeat-purchase behavior as the strongest predictor of the purchasing-decision outcome, followed by brand trust, brand selection, and product quality. Brand image and purchase experience did not demonstrate significant independent contributions when the other predictors were considered.

The proposed framework therefore centers strategic positioning on consistent product quality, credible brand practices, deliberate consumer preference, and customer retention, while treating brand image, packaging information, and purchase experience as supporting capabilities.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Honey producers should establish clear quality standards for purity, flavor, texture, color, packaging integrity, and consistency across production batches. Quality-control procedures should be documented and reviewed regularly.
2. Producers and marketers should develop a credible trust architecture through accurate product information, verifiable sourcing, trustworthy certifications, transparent production practices, and consistent fulfillment of brand promises.
3. Enterprises should use value-based and flexible pricing strategies. Competitive price points, varied package sizes, and limited promotions can serve price-sensitive consumers without weakening quality positioning. Premium variants should be supported by credible certification or traceability evidence.
4. Packaging should serve as both a recognizable visual identity and an informational mechanism communicating origin, product attributes, certifications, proper use, storage, and traceability.
5. Enterprises should reinforce deliberate brand selection through clear differentiation, verified origin, consistent quality, recognizable value propositions, credible digital content, and systematic responses to consumer reviews.
6. Customer-retention programs should be based on consistent product performance, appropriate promotions, customer communication, and post-purchase engagement. Loyalty initiatives should reward continued purchasing without relying exclusively on discounts.
7. Physical and digital purchase channels should be improved as supporting capabilities through convenient access, knowledgeable personnel, clear displays, and reliable digital service.
8. Honey producers, marketing managers, retailers, and industry organizations may adopt the proposed framework when planning product development, pricing, communication, quality assurance, channel management, and retention initiatives.
9. Future studies may use probability-based or multi-location designs and examine social-media influence, sustainability, geographic origin, authenticity concerns, and demographic differences. Longitudinal research may determine whether changes in quality, trust, or retention strategies correspond with subsequent changes in purchasing behavior.

5.3 Implications of the Study

Managerially, the findings imply that honey enterprises should move beyond conventional image-centered branding. Brand recognition may attract attention, but durable positioning requires the conversion of visibility into verifiable quality, trust, deliberate selection, and repeat purchasing. Managers should allocate resources toward quality-control systems, transparent sourcing, certification credibility, information accuracy, and customer-retention mechanisms.

For enterprise innovation, the framework integrates consumer analytics with strategy. Firms can use evidence concerning value perceptions, trust, quality, brand selection, and repeat purchasing to design product tiers, traceability systems, packaging information, digital communication, and retention programs. Repeat-purchase rates, complaints, switching behavior, and customer feedback should be monitored alongside sales and brand awareness.

Theoretically, the study demonstrates that economic and brand-related evaluations are interconnected. Price-conscious consumers did not disregard brands; instead, they used brand image, quality, and trust to evaluate whether the product justified its price. The difference between the correlational and regression findings also suggests that brand image may function primarily as a recognition or consideration mechanism, while product quality and brand trust provide more direct support for purchasing decisions.

For the honey industry, the findings emphasize the commercial importance of authenticity, consistency, and credible information. Industry associations and producers may use the results to promote clearer labeling, traceability practices, quality standards, and responsible product claims. Such practices may reduce uncertainty, differentiate legitimate producers, and improve confidence in branded honey products.

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