

UNVEILING CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF HERBAL DRINKS IN SRI LANKA: INSIGHTS FROM THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Dasanayaka K.G.N.M.¹

Abstract

Raising health consciousness has opened up significant opportunities in different market segments. Herbal drinks are one such segment among them. But the herbal drinks market is a less focused area. In this vein, this study examines the impact of consumer purchase intention on the herbal drinks market in Sri Lanka through the insights of ‘Theory of Planned Behaviour.’ The study advocates the positivist philosophy accompanied by the deductive and quantitative approach. The study distributes a self-administered questionnaire to a sample of 385 individuals through the convenience sampling technique. ‘Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control’ served as the independent variables, whereas the ‘consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks’ was the dependent variable. ‘Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression were employed as the data analysis techniques. The findings indicate that there is a strong correlation between attitude and perceived behavioural control on consumer intention of herbal drinks, whereas there is a moderate correlation between subjective norm and intention. The regression results conclude that there is a significant positive impact of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on the purchase intention of herbal drinks. The manufacturers can develop new marketing strategies to uplift the consumer attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control in order to obtain the benefits in their sales. Since these three independent variables are the players that give rise to the actual behaviours.

Keywords: Attitude, herbal drinks, perceived behavioural control, purchase intention, subjective norm

¹Department of Commerce & Financial Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
Email: madushanin405@gmail.com*



DOI:

Introduction

The consumption of herbal drinks has tremendously increased worldwide due to the significant hype in rising consumer health consciousness. Herbal drinks are a pivotal part of health and nutrition since globally improved health and wellness have been successfully attracted towards the herbal drinks sector (Aeknarajindawat et al., 2024). As compared with the past, consumers in this modernised era are more aware of their health and wellness. Herbal drinks are beverages that are concocted in natural substances sourced from different morphological types of plant parts such as leaves, roots, even the buds, flowers, fruits, and stems (Shaik et al., 2023). Sri Lankan herbal drinks have their own heritage, even from the past, since they were used by Sri Lankan ancestors. ‘Infusions, decoctions, herbal tea, and fruit drinks’ are some categories under the herbal drinks, and the healing power embedded in the herbal drinks is idiosyncratic (Rashid et al., 2018). A study conducted by Layoo et al in 2024 elaborated that there are still limited studies focusing on variances in herbal consumption-related decisions and the demographic factors that led to herbal drinks (gender, age, work types, education, and marital status). While the broader category of ‘herbal products’ covers a wide array of items ranging from oral supplements, cosmetics and other topical applications, this study specifically narrows its attention to herbal drinks. This is due to less attention on the area (Shaik et al., 2023). Notwithstanding, Sri Lanka’s traditional herbal drinks (known as ‘kola kenda’; one of the porridge varieties in Sri Lanka prepared using various green leaves) have been largely admired as a unique beverage in boosting the immune system and those beliefs are even rooted in Sri Lankan culture. The other types of herbal drinks (such as infusions and decoctions known as ‘kasaya’ in Sri Lanka) were used by the ancestors during their daily routines, and they valued them as unique healers for all diseases. Though these advances are associated with herbal drinks, the attention on herbal drinks related studies is quite less as per the literature. But herbal drinks are also positioned in the market by holding a unique momentum in beverage consumption. Therefore, consumer intention for herbal drinks should be successfully built by the manufacturers to lead them to form the actual purchasing behaviour. They must gain sufficient knowledge from the consumers of herbal drinks. Since the intention is the influential player in forming the actual buying behaviour (Morwitz, 2012). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the important practical gaps that exist in the literature on herbal drinks while leveraging the robust theoretical framework that was put forward by Ajzen in 1991. This particular research advocates ‘Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to determine the intention to consume herbal drinks in Sri Lanka through the lens of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. Since these three variables are the most vital players of determining the consumer purchase intention. In the same token, the demographic profile that is undertaken under this study will further serve to fill the stressed gaps in the literature. Furthermore, the literature stressed that though the favourable background persists towards herbal drinks, less attention on herbal drinks has hindered the awareness and attraction of the consumers towards herbal drinks (Shaik et al., 2023). Therefore, the research problem emerges as determining the impact of herbal drinks on consumer purchase intention through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, since this theory suggests that an immediate causal factor of behaviour is the intention (Sakulwattana et al., 2025).

Research questions

RQ1: What is the impact of Attitude on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks?

RQ2: What is the impact of subjective norm on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks?

RQ3: What is the impact of perceived behavioural control on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks?

Research objectives

RO1: To discover the impact of Attitude on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks.

RO2: To discover the impact of subjective norms on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks.

RO3: To discover the impact of perceived behavioural control on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks.

Study contribution

Shaik et al. (2023) concluded that attention towards herbal drinks is poor, though herbal drinks offer many benefits. This suggests that important attention should be paid to the area as a way of fulfilling the existing gap. Hanmontree et al. (2022) concluded that the awareness of the medical community towards herbal drinks should be improved by sharing the health benefits associated with herbal drinks. This will fulfil the knowledge gap. Further, through this research, the affiliated parties such as herbal manufacturers and herbal advertisers will have the opportunity to structure their operations as per the findings of the research, and herbal drinks are an essential player in this because health consideration has emerged as the trend in this era.

Literature Review

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is an important catalyst in determining the actual purchasing behaviour of an individual. Attitude toward behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are the key pillars in this regard, as articulated under the 'Theory of Planned Behaviour'. Intention stems from the subjective probability of a particular individual towards his or her behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Consumer intentions and behaviour have a positive relationship with each other (Wiwoho & Riptiono, 2022). Balau (2018) stressed that 'Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control stand as the predictors of intention and the stronger the intention, the stronger the drive to perform that behaviour (Balau, 2018). Studies on purchase intentions of health drinks could provide utmost relief for companies, allowing them to pinpoint the optimal combination of ingredients that consumers require in the product (Bhagat & Ravi, 2018). Since intention is a powerful predictor of an individual's actual behaviour, the successful strategies followed by manufacturers in capturing positive consumer intentions will also influence the actual purchasing behaviour towards the products. Therefore, this particular study examined the purchase intention of herbal drinks through the lens of three predictors of intention: Attitude towards herbal drinks, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control.'

Attitudes

Ajzen (1991) emphasised that attitudes are the favourable or unfavourable evaluation of a specific behaviour. Attitudes stand as the learned predisposition in behaving favourably or unfavourably towards a given object. Since attitudes are focal to behaviours shown during the buying process (Aeknarajindawat, 2024). A study based on herbal beverages that was performed by Vaddhano et al. (2023) found that 'attitudes towards healthy beverages and the purchase intention had a positive relationship.' If the consumer forms a favourable attitude towards a product or a service, this will eventually pinpoint the intention, and thus, attitudes and intention influence each other. Therefore, to further elucidate this, the first study hypothesis is as follows.

H1: There is an impact of Attitude on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

Subjective norm

Ajzen (1991) elaborated, subjective norms are the sensed social pressure in performing a behaviour. Those social pressures may be from, as per Wiwoho and Riptiono (2022), the closest people, such as the parents, family, relatives, spouse or friends. People's decisions are being altered by those social influencers. People are more conscious of what others perceive when they undertake a certain decision. Therefore, whatever the positive or negative thoughts, feelings and ideas of the surrounding environment are cause for a decision. Vaddhano et al. (2023) found that 'subjective norms had a positive relationship on purchase intention towards healthy beverages.' In this particular research has been introduced the below hypothesis based on the impact of social pressures on herbal drinks and their purchase intention.

H2: There is an impact of subjective norm on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

Perceived behavioural control

Ajzen (1991) expressed that an individual's perceived ease or difficulty in performing a particular behaviour. Perceived behavioural control stands as the people's perception of whether they have control or not with regard to a behaviour (Hussin, 2021). As per this study, if individuals perceive that they have the controlling ability to purchase herbal drinks, this can affect their intention to purchase and consume herbal drinks. Therefore, in order to elucidate deeper insights in this arena, the following hypothesis will stand as the third hypothesis.

H3: There is an impact of perceived behavioural control on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

Methodology

The study was undertaken during years of April 2024 to April 2025. The sample (aged between 15 - 60 years and above) was taken by 385 consumers living in Sri Lanka, advocating the convenience sampling technique (Sakulwattana et al., 2025). This research has used convenience sampling since the related study researchers have advocated the same. The study was undertaken in the Western Province of Sri Lanka since this province represents the most populous province of Sri Lanka, as per the latest data of the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka. The researcher was able to collect 385 responses using the direct online distribution of the questionnaire via the printed mode and social media, especially through WhatsApp. The respondents were informed that their responses would remain anonymous, confidential and would be used for educational purposes only. It did not collect any sensitive information.

Dependent variable

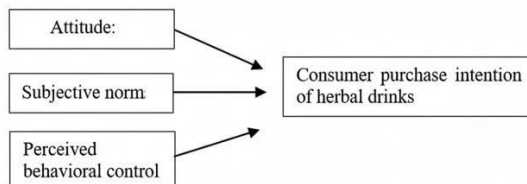
Consumer purchase intention on herbal drinks will serve as the dependent variable.

Independent variables

This study considers three major independent variables, namely 'Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework



(Source: Author's Compilation)

This study employs a deductive approach that is guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour. This quantitative and cross-sectional study has collected data at a single point of time. The self-administered questionnaire was prepared using mainly two sections, whereas the first section of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the respondents. The second part consisted of the main research questions measured on a five-point Likert scale. Under the inferential statistics, the correlation (Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation - PPMC) and regression (Multiple Linear Regression - MLR) were employed as data analysis techniques. Before testing the regression, certain parametric assumptions were tested, such as 'normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, independence of observations, multicollinearity, and normal distribution of values of residuals.' All assumptions satisfied the acceptability criteria.

Findings and Discussion

Validity and reliability analysis

Convergent Validity is represented by the 'factor loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).' Internal Consistency is represented by the 'Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.' Composite reliability of 0.70 is regarded as the recommended value (Hair et al., 2010), whereas Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended a Composite Reliability (CR) value of 0.60 or more as the accepted limits. Fornell and Larcker (1981) further recommended an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 as the recommended limits in research.

Table 1

Internal consistency and convergent validity

Variable	Item	Factor Loading (>=0.5)	Cronbach's Alpha (>=0.7)	CR (>= 0.7)	AVE (>= 0.5)
ATT (Attitude)	ATT 1	0.693	0.812	0.869	0.571
	ATT 2	0.794			
	ATT 3	0.780			
	ATT 4	0.753			
	ATT 5	0.756			
SN (Subjective Norm)	SN 1	0.783	0.756	0.845	0.578
	SN 2	0.698			
	SN 3	0.758			
	SN 4	0.798			
PBC (Perceived Behavioral Control)	PBC 1	0.757	0.749	0.841	0.571
	PBC 2	0.738			
	PBC 3	0.739			
	PBC 4	0.786			
INT(Consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks)	INT 1	0.750	0.751	0.843	0.573
	INT 2	0.744			
	INT 3	0.787			
	INT 4	0.746			

(Source: Author's Compilation)

There was adequate discriminant validity as per Table 2, according to Fornell & Larcker, which is that the square root of the AVE of each construct should be more than its other constructs' correlation values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2

Discriminant validity

	ATT	SN	PBC	INT
ATT	0.756			
SN	0.445	0.760		
PBC	0.617	0.374	0.756	
INT	0.562	0.417	0.571	0.757

(Source: Author's Compilation)

As per the above Table 3, the highest responses were represented by the male parties (56%), whereas the married category was outstanding in responding (52%). The 30-44 age category represented the highest portion of the overall responses. Most of the respondents were under the Secondary Education. 200 respondents served as the employed category was in the highest rank in responding. 45% of the respondents were under Rs. 25,000.

Table 3

Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	215	55.8
	Female	170	44.2
Marital Status	Unmarried	170	44.2
	Married	200	51.9
	Divorced	10	2.6
	Separated	05	1.3
Age	15 - 29	100	25.9
	30 - 44	110	28.6
	45 - 59	105	27.3
	Above 60	70	18.2
Education Level	Primary (Up to O/L)	20	5.2

	Secondary (Up to A/L)	215	55.8
	Undergraduate	100	25.9
	Graduate	40	10.4
	Post-Graduate	10	2.6
Employment	Employed	200	51.9
	Self employed	160	41.6
	Unemployed	15	3.9
	Pensioner	10	2.6
Monthly Income	Below Rs. 25,000	175	45.4
	Rs. 25,000 - Rs. 44,000	100	25.9
	Rs. 45,000 - Rs. 64,000	65	16.9
	Above Rs. 65,000	30	7.8
	Dependent	15	3.9

(Source: Author's Compilation)

As per Cohen (1988), if the correlation coefficient value is higher than 0.5, that indicates a strong correlation whereas if the value relies between 0.3 to 0.5; that pinpoints a moderate correlation. If the value is between 0.1 to 0.3, there is a small correlation. Table 4 shows that the correlation between “ATT and PBC on INT” was strong since the value was 0.5. The correlation between “SN on INT” was moderate.

Table 3

Correlation analysis

	Consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks (INT)
Attitude (ATT)	0.562
Subjective Norm (SN)	0.417
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.571

(Source: Author's Compilation)

Since the unstandardized coefficients and the standardised coefficients were positive, this elucidated a statistically significant positive impact between the variables. In the same token, the significant values of the three variables (Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) were less than the P-value of 0.005. This indicated that the below-stated hypotheses were accepted.

H1: There is an impact of Attitude on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

H2: There is an impact of subjective norm on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

H3: There is an impact of perceived behavioural control on consumer purchase intention of herbal drinks

Table 4

Multiple linear regression (MLR)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	.483	.162	.003
	ATT	.289	.053	.000
	SN	.159	.042	.000
	PBC	.328	.049	.000

(Source: Author's Compilation)

Conclusion

This research has meticulously disclosed the insights of consumer purchase intention on herbal drinks, facilitating a definitive roadmap for the herbal drinks market. The findings transcend strong and moderate correlations, establishing a statistically significant impact between the three pillars of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and a consumer's purchase intention. The findings highlight the multifaceted aspect of consumer decision-making, stressing the pivotal roles of attitudes, social norms, and perceived control in shaping the purchasing behaviour of consumers. Consumer attitudes are a vital driver of purchase intention. In this study, the way consumers feel about herbal drinks, the beliefs on taste, health benefits, and overall value, significantly affected their willingness to purchase herbal drinks. These findings emphasise the paramount significance of reinforcing positive attitudes in the consumers' minds by the herbal drinks manufacturers. Since attitudes and intentions have a positive impact, as per the findings. Therefore, marketing efforts should be directed towards consumers by spreading awareness of the unique benefits of herbal ingredients. This will pinpoint positive outcomes for the business by way of building a robust brand image linked with purity, wellness, and efficacy. Furthermore, the manufacturers and the marketers should fine-tune testimonials and clear communication of health benefits to uplift the positive attitudes of the customers toward herbal drinks. Beyond the attitudes, subjective norm or social influences play an outstanding role in building the consumer intention for herbal drinks. When consumers believe in any recommendation made by their closest precious people in their lives (family, health professionals, friends, other influencers), there is a tendency to consume the approved herbal drinks, or they are more vigilant in purchasing that brand. Therefore, the manufacturers should strategically recognise and impress the reference groups. The manufacturers could link with influencer marketing campaigns, community engagement sessions, partner with industry experts, and build platforms for consumers to spread their experiences, thereby fostering a collaborative environment for herbal drink consumption. The perceived behavioural control involves factors such as 'accessibility, ease of obtaining information, affordability, and perceived complexity of the product. Therefore, if a consumer feels those factors are not performed well, that itself acts to lower the consumer's intention towards a product or a service. The manufacturers must focus on availing herbal drinks through different distribution channels, offering competitive pricing offers, providing concise product information such as on labels, marketing materials, and websites and smoothing the purchasing process of herbal drinks. Through active involvement in addressing concerns about taste or any other preparation process of herbal drinks can also develop this sense of controlling power. In order to uplift the consumer purchase intention, herbal drink manufacturers should adhere to a holistic marketing approach and a continuous product development process that simultaneously focuses on these three pillars of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Since, based on those three, the other factors can be formed. Due to the significant hype in raising the wellness and herbal-related beverages, manufacturers will have the unique opportunity to introduce new herbal drinks and thereby contribute to the national economy. As the previous researchers revealed, the awareness of herbal beverages through proper communication channels and education is pivotal. The manufacturers should launch targeted sessions or campaigns in order to stress the benefits inherent in the herbal drink. Ensuring readily accessibility and affordability through sound distribution networks, attractive pricing, and accurate product information will help reduce the perceived barriers to purchasing herbal drinks. Therefore, herbal drink manufacturers can effectively build consumer intention into an actual purchase in this evolved health and wellness market by strategically addressing the consumer attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control since these three are the main players in building the actual purchasing behaviour. Future studies can be focused on adding more variables to the conceptual framework by increasing the sample size.

References

- Aeknarajindawat, N., Manaswatcharapong, R., & Aeknarajindawat, N. (2024). The impact of digital marketing and consumer attitudes on repurchase intentions of herbal beverages in Bangkok. *International Journal of Operations and Quantitative Management*, 30(3), 61–76.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Balau, M. (2018). Exploring the link between intention and behavior in consumer research. *European Integration – Realities and Perspectives*, 134–141.
- Bhagat, S., & Ravi, S. S. (2018). Analysis of health drinks: What is satisfying consumer's thirst? *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 48(9), 40–54.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.

- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312>
- Hanmontree, P., Prinyawiwatkul, W., & Sae-Eaw, A. (2022). Emotion and wellness profiles of herbal drinks using different questionnaire designs. *Foods*, 11(3), 348. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods11030348>
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Hussin, R., Majid, H. A. M. A., & Sharoni, S. K. A. (2021). The application of the theory of planned behaviour among gum Arabic consumers in Malaysia. *IJUM Journal of Human Sciences*, 3(1), 48–56.
- Layoo, N., Djawa, S. K., Rahman, W., Ladjin, N., Saini, A. Z., Raheni, C., & Anggo, S. (2024). How differences in herbal beverage consumer decisions based on demographic factors? *JBTI: Jurnal Bisnis: Teori dan Implementasi*, 15(1), 101–113.
- Morwitz, V. (2012). Consumers' purchase intentions and their behavior. *Foundations and Trends in Marketing*, 7(3), 181–230. <https://doi.org/10.1561/17000000036>
- Rashid, N., Gbedomon, R. C., Ahmad, M., Salako, V. K., Zafar, M., & Malik, K. (2018). Traditional knowledge on herbal drinks among indigenous communities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 14(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13002-018-0217-8>
- Sakulwattana, W., Seangpraw, K., Kantow, S., Sukhabot, K., Jaengpromma, P., & Ong-Artborirak, P. (2025). Factors influencing the consumption of Jiaogulan herbal tea in Phayao Province, Northern Thailand. *Journal of Public Health and Development*, 23(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.55131/jphd/2025/230116>
- Shaik, M. I., Hamdi, I. H., & Sarbon, N. M. (2023). A comprehensive review on traditional herbal drinks: Physicochemical, phytochemicals and pharmacology properties. *Food Chemistry Advances*, 3, 100460.
- Vaddhano, N., Sancoko, A. H., & Tulipa, D. (2023). Predicting consumer behavior toward healthy beverages in Surabaya. *JEM17: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen*, 8(2), 163–178.
- Wiwoho, G., & Riptiono, S. (2022). Effects of subjective norm, attitude and consumer desire toward intention to purchase Indonesian herbal. *Jurnal Manajemen & Agribisnis*, 19(2), 265.