

Factor Affecting Purchase Intention of Health Supplement in Malaysia

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Abstract

This research was initiated to bridge the gap by determining the factors that influence the purchase intention health supplement in Malaysia and thus provide insights about the marketing plan to the marketers in the health supplement industry to improve their competitiveness. Questionnaires were distributed to 386 individual by convenience sampling in Malaysia via social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp. Besides, correlation study and multiple regression were applied as the research method. Among five independent variables, only informational influence showed the insignificant result on purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia, while perceived price showed negative relationship on purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia.

Keywords

Purchase Intention, Theory Planned Behaviour, Health supplement

Background

The health issue has increasingly become a concern and critical in today's world (Goetzke, Nitzko and Spiller, 2014). Due to the shifting in the values of consumer towards lifestyle and health nowadays, the healthiness of the diet are attracting and drawing the attention as well as the concern of consumer (Szakaly, Szente, Kover et al., 2012). Therefore, the increasing interests rise within consumer on health and wellbeing issue are contributing significantly on the emerging of health supplement, and 70 per cent of global sales on the supplement is comprised by the US, western Europe and Japan (Chung, Stoel, Xu et al, 2012). In addition, the total sales on health products has reached 9.6 billion Malaysia Ringgit (RM) in the year 2012 in Malaysia, it is showing an increasing tendency of 45 per cent as compared to the year 2007, this is due to the significant growth in the health product's consumption to achieve a healthy life and thus showed the extent of level increased of disposable income significantly, education with better qualification as well as the improvement on living requirement and criteria (Noor, Yap, Liew et al, 2014).

The goal of the current study is to determine the factors that influence on purchase intention in choosing health supplement in Malaysia and thus provide insights and results obtained in this study to help marketers in the health supplement industry to improve their

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performance and sales. However, there are limited studies of intention on the purchasing of health supplement in Malaysia. Lack of clear concept and strategies on purchase intention of health supplement has resulted in minimal engagement with the consumer in the industry of health supplement. Through the study of purchase intention presents an ideal approach for gaining understanding into underlying factors on how different people prioritize when confronted with different needs and situation, and finally, fulfil them and retain market competitiveness (Griskevicius and Kenrick, 2013).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as behavioural intention of an individual which depends on their attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms, which are associated with the behaviour (Asshidin, Abidin and Borhan, 2016). Besides, Fischer (2016) also stated that consumers behave differently when emerged in a different context, which might be influenced by the external as well as the internal motivation during the process of purchasing.

Some certain factors or attributes influence the consumer before they purchase a product, thus, the preferences of a product towards a consumer could be changed constantly (Yap and Yazdanifard, 2014). Therefore, the factors that influence the purchase intention can be categorized into five major groups: informational influence, normative influence, perceived behavioural control, health-conscious, and perceived price (Singh & Verma, 2017; Jay, 2013; Noor et al., 2013).

Normative Influence

Normative influence is defining as “an influence to coincide with the expectations positively of one another”; it is reflecting the value-expressive tendency of a person, driven by a need for psychological acceptance which associates with a social group (Hu et al., 2016). Individuals are known to show “the need to position or intensify their image among others through the acquiring of different brands and products, the willingness to fulfill the expectation of others on their buying decisions, and/or the inclination to study about the products by the observation or information-seeking from others (Ladero, Casquest and Singh, 2015).

Informational Influence

Informational influences are normally dependent on the judgment of receivers towards a relevant content of a particular message, and this does include other elements such as the quality dimension of information (Filieri, 2015). After some years of the initial proposed model in TPB, researchers extended the variables by adding a few components about criterion and the behaviour in the past, which further strengthened the power of prediction on the theory (Kashif, Sarifuddin and Hassan, 2015). Therefore, social influences in TPB may be broadened and enlarged to include informational influence (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel, 1989).

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioural control is a significant variable in explaining the ability of an individual to act on the behaviour in concern, and assuming that they are rational when considering the consequences of their actions, it is found to have a positive relationship with behavioural intention (Ramayah, Lee, & Lim, 2012). There were some studies reported that perceived behavioural control to have a positive significant relationship on the purchase intention toward

the green product (Ma, Littrell, and Niehm, 2012; Wang, Liu and Qi, 2014). However, one study showed perceived behavioural control do not have a significant relationship to the consumer purchase intention of green food product (Arvola, Vassallo, Dean et al., 2008).

Health Conscious

Health consciousness is referring to the degree a person plays their role actively in the maintenance of his or her health (Barauskaite et al., 2017). Further, they have the motivation to improve or sustain their status of lifestyle by aspiring towards health behaviour, such as purchasing and consume healthy foods (Barauskaite et al., 2017). Consumers who are aware and focus on their health are expecting to achieve positive results from eating a healthy diet. Kim and Chung (2011) also mentioned that consciousness and awareness of health is the most significant factor in influencing consumer's purchase intention, and also explained that purchase intentions were not strong when health consciousness was low.

Perceived Price

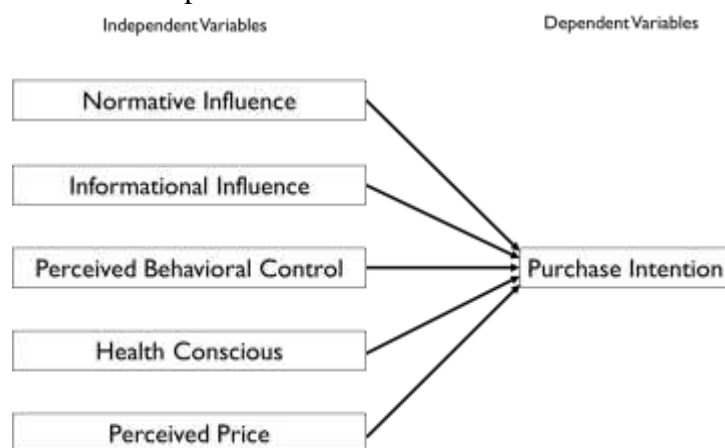
Perceived price is also known as the relationship between price and quality reveal, and finally, customers build their perception about the price itself because they do not remember the actual price of the product (Ruslim and Tumewu, 2015). In the study of Ramadhan and Muthohar (2019) showed that perceived price has a positive relationship on private label products. They stated that the purchase intention of customers normally refers to lower prices. Gan, Wee, Ozanne et al. (2008) found out that higher prices eventually hurt the purchase intention of organic food.

Literature Gap

It has also been analysed that there is a research gap that has motivated the researcher to fulfil the gaps by having the study in this field of research. Consequently, this study aimed to provide the data and information to ascertain the relationship between each factor and purchase intention of health supplements in Malaysia as this study would then help to enhance the understanding on the purchase intention on health supplements concerning the factors involved in the study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was presented as below:



Research Methodology

The current study is considered to be a descriptive study to identify the relationship between IVs (Normative influence, Informational influence, Perceived Behavioral Control, Health-conscious and Perceived Price) and purchase intention in choosing health supplement in Malaysia. Therefore, a quantitative study approach is suitable for this research by studying at the theory and thus build hypotheses from the theory. The correlation design approach by using convenience sampling is employed in this research. In this study, the unit of analysis at the individual level are chosen on the consumer who using health supplement in Malaysia as the data gathered from each respondent is treated as an individual data source through the scores obtained in the questionnaires distributed. The data will be collected from 386 respondents. Data will be analysed through SPSS including factor analysis, reliability test, correlation matrix and finally hypotheses testing.

Research Finding

The preliminary data analyses were done to ensure that the items for the full data of 386 respondents were appropriate for the hypothesis testing.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Factor	KMO	Bartlett Test of Sphericity
IV1 – Normative Influence	0.716	P-value = 0.000
IV2 – Informational Influence	0.500	P-value = 0.000
IV3 – Perceived Behavioral Control	0.500	P-value = 0.000
IV4 – Health Conscious	0.702	P-value = 0.000
IV5 – Perceived Price	0.700	P-value = 0.000
DV – Purchase Intention	0.657	P-value = 0.000

KMO Bartlett's test of Sphericity result is all greater than 0.5, which indicated that there's sampling adequacy.

Table 2: Reliability Test: Cronbach Alpha

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Items
IV1- Normative Influence	0.840	3
IV2- Informational Influence	0.819	2
IV3- Perceived Behavioral Control	0.845	2
IV4- Health Conscious	0.789	3
IV5- Perceived Price	0.801	3
DV- Purchase Intention	0.772	3

Based on the tables above, normative influence as a factor seemed to have the highest predictive value for the specified data. The value of Cronbach's alpha is all more than 0.7, which means a high level of internal consistency for the scale. The correlation value of 1.00 means two variables are correlated, the correlation value of 0.00 means there is absolutely no correlation (Pyrczak, 2006).

F test of 139.719 (sig. = 0.000) shows that the overall regression is significant. The R^2 of 0.648 shows that 64.8% of the variation in a rating of purchase intention is explained by the regression model or the research constructs. The fit of the regression is deemed to be moderate to high, thereby indicating that the framework and hypotheses for this study, has a moderate to the high level of predictive fit when taken as a whole. Further, all of the factors had the VIF value less than 10, means they do not inter-correlated (Yahya, Torong and Muda, 2017). The result shows that four hypotheses (H1, H3, H4, H5) were significant based on the results and H2 is not significant.

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Accept/Reject/Predicted/Not Predicted
H ₁	Significant
H ₂	Not Significant
H ₃	Significant
H ₄	Significant
H ₅	Significant

Conclusion and Recommendation

According to the statistical results, hypothesis 1 was significant by the statistical result in the research. This supports previous findings in the study by Teng and Wang (2015) and Haque, Sarwar, Yasmin et al. (2015). As noted by Teng and Wang (2015), families and friends would be an important referral for Malaysian consumers.

The relationship between informational influence and purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia was not significant in this study. There are some consumers with independent traits are more likely to follow their thinking and making their own decision which totally opposite from the consumer with dependent traits who conform to the suggestions of others during a purchase, in other words, consumers with low susceptibility to informational influence tend not to rely on the other users during a purchase (Chen, Teng, Yu and Yu, 2016). Wen, Bernard and Chang (2009) explained that if the functions of the endorsed product is utilitarian at the first place, it is more likely to evoke the needs of consumer to be right than the need to be liked, this is because products with utilitarian are normally brought functions and cognitive process is required, therefore, the internalization process is needed for the evaluation on that particular products.

The findings for perceived behavioural control were accordant with previous research that collectively supported that perceived behavioural control can predict the intention of conducting health-related behaviour significantly. It might due to the uniqueness of health supplement product towards the youngster, as most of the respondents in this study were consisted of the youngster from the age group of 21-25 and 26-30 for about 86.5% out of 100%. This also supported by Lee, Lim and Yong (2016) that health supplement as a unique product among youngster, therefore they relied more on their point of views towards their behavioural control when they purchase the health supplement. Chiou (1998) had strengthened the fact that when an individual does not have self-confidence in the evaluation of a product, in other words

being low familiarity with them, perceived behavioural control will then significantly influenced their behavioural intention.

According to the statistical results, hypothesis 4 was significant by the statistical result in the research. Barauskaite, Gineikiene, Fennis et al. (2018) stated that consumer with higher health-conscious is aware of and concerned about their health, thus they could be motivated to improve or sustain their state of well-being by pursuing healthy behaviours, such as consuming healthy supplements. A consumer which has the health-conscious might be more heedful of their health behaviours, it is probably due to the greater health consciousness, they are more positively disposed to health supplements as they are likely to link healthy attitudes and behaviours as prevention-oriented actions such as taking health supplements (Willis and Royne Stafford, 2016).

The relationship between perceived price and purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia are negatively correlated, means perceived price increased, the purchase intention decreased. Evidence exists to support the notion that several consumers tend to use price as a sign to indicate higher product quality (Mhlophe, 2016). Price can play a negative or positive role in influencing the purchase intention of consumer towards health supplement. Based on the fact that health supplement is normally higher in price and also premised on the fact that a higher price raises the 'affordability issue', which ultimately results in a negative effect on price-sensitive consumer, especially the consumer in this study were mostly consisted by youngster who has the monthly income below RM 3,000 or from RM 3,001 to RM 7,000.

In this study, health-conscious has a stronger positive relationship with the purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia, followed by the normative influence and lastly the perceived behavioural control. Marketers who involve in the healthcare industry has the responsibility to raise health consciousness and also the awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Marketers could have some events such as health campaign which offer a lower cost for body checkup or blood test package, free health talk to educate the consumer on the health issues in the recent years and also the prevention actions in daily life to avoid chronic illness. This could improve the interaction between consumer, and at the same time, building the trust with the consumer by applying and passing the correct health and nutrition knowledge to the consumer. When consumer conceives a valuable experience and giving positive feedback, the consumer feels comfortable to further interact with you in future, and eventually influence positively their purchase intention.

From the study, the result showed that all independent variables have a significant influence on purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia except the informational influence, and the perceived price has a negative relationship with purchase intention. The result from the hypotheses testing were also able explained by the past literature. In the study, it can conclude that health-conscious is the stronger behaviour on the purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia. Therefore, marketers in the healthcare industry can study deeper and further on the health-conscious to improve their performance in terms of revenue and also services.

Limitation of the Study

This study used a convenience sampling method which the respondents were selected because of their availability and proximity. Therefore, the findings could not be generalized to all

population ranging from age 21 and above in the whole Malaysia region because the respondent was mostly from age 21-25 and 26-30, the data from age group 30 and above are lesser. Further, the ethnicity of the respondents in this study is mostly Chinese which represented 91.5%. For instance, half of the questionnaires were restrictedly distributed only to friends and family members over social media. Besides, some respondents provided feedback regarding misunderstanding of questions in the survey due to be not familiar with English which was the language used in the survey, a majority of them were Chinese (94.34%). This misinterpretation of questions may generate incorrect data. In addition, there are only 3 questions in each variable, it could cause the study to be not representative enough to understand and describe the factors that influence the purchase intention of health supplement in Malaysia.

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