

AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS AYURVEDIC PRODUCTS IN MUMBAI

Mr. Kiran Shamuel Gomes¹ and Dr. Naresh Ramdas Madhavi²

¹Assistant Professor, Bunts Sangha's Anna Leela College of Commerce & Shobha Jayaram Shetty College for BMS, Shashi Manmohan Shetty Higher Education Complex, Buntar Bhavan Cross Rd, Kurla, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400024

²Professor, Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's Mahatma Phule Arts, Science & Commerce College, Karanjade Village, Taluka- Panvel, Dist.- Raigad, Maharashtra 410206

ABSTRACT:

Ayurvedic products are traditional medicines derived from natural sources that have been used for centuries in India and other countries. The consumer perception of Ayurvedic products is influenced by various factors such as awareness, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, satisfaction, and loyalty. This paper aims to review the existing literature on consumer perception of ayurvedic products and identify the key drivers and challenges for their adoption and consumption. The paper also suggests some implications for marketers and policymakers to enhance the consumer perception and acceptance of Ayurvedic products.

Keywords: Ayurvedic products, Consumer perception, Consumer preference

MEANING OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION

The subjective interpretation and understanding that people have of goods, brands, or services depends on their experiences, cultural background, attitudes, and beliefs. This is known as consumer perception. It deals with how customers view a product or service's value, quality, and advantages, all of which have an impact on their final purchasing decisions and behavior. Many things, including advertising, word-of-mouth, individual experiences, and cultural standards, might influence people's perceptions. Businesses must comprehend customer perception in order to properly position their products and develop marketing plans that appeal to their target market.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Ayurvedic products are traditional herbal medicines that have a long history of use in India. They are widely believed to have various health benefits and to be safe and natural. However, in the modern market, many factors influence the consumer perception of ayurvedic products, such as taste, fragrance, packaging, perceived health benefits, quality, price, availability, branding, advertising, and social norms. Therefore, it is important to analyze the consumer perception of ayurvedic products in (Mumbai) India, as it can help the producers and marketers to understand the needs and preferences of the customers, and to design effective strategies to promote their products and increase their sales.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alessandro & Luisa (2014) Explored the cognitive and emotional choices of consumers regarding the 'Red Orange of Sicily' They used a new theoretical approach known as 'neuromarketing' to understand the preferences expressed by consumers. **Bode & Shankar (2017)** In this article, the authors conducted a literature review on the experience of 14 young Ayurvedic doctors who received government-sanctioned Ayurveda college education in India. richness and diversity of Ayurvedic knowledge and practice, and prepare them for a more holistic and pluralistic approach to health care. **Hanna Willman-Livarinen (2017)** The article presented a concise and informative overview of how consumers will make decisions in the future. The authors used theoretical and empirical evidence to examine the factors that influence consumer behavior. **Korenkova, et.al (2020)** This paragraph compares how consumers perceive traditional and modern advertising methods. The authors surveyed 244 customers in Slovakia about their views on 21 kinds of ads, using a non-parametric test. The results showed that social media ads had more impact than most other ads. The authors suggested that companies should choose the best form or mix of forms of advertising for their product and target group to stay competitive in the market. **Gunden, et.al (2008)** This paragraph summarizes a study that analyzed consumer preferences for information sources on food safety in Izmir, Turkey. The study used the fuzzy-pair-wise comparison to measure the preference of 385 consumers for six information sources: television programs, doctors/experts, newspaper/journal articles, radio programs, and friends/neighbours. **Madilas, et.al (2013)** This article investigated how consumers' perception of online shopping affects their intention to shop online in Greece. The researchers collected primary data from 120 respondents. The results indicated that perceived usefulness was the most significant factor influencing online shopping intention. Perceived ease and perceived enjoyment also had a positive effect on online shopping intention. Perceived risk had a negative relationship with intention. **Cobiac et.al (2018)** article aimed to introduce and apply a novel method for evaluating the economic and health effects of following food-based guidelines. The method integrated an economic model and an epidemiological model to estimate the health benefits of dietary changes. The researchers simulated 95% changes in the intake of seven food groups, either increasing or decreasing them according to the recommendations. They found that all the scenarios improved health outcomes. **Bhatia & Jain (2013)** This paper reviews the environmental issues and the green values of the consumers, their awareness of environmental issues, green products, and practices. The paper aims to explore the consumer's perception and preferences for green marketing practices and products using a structured questionnaire. The study involved 106 respondents. **Viswanathan, et.al (2003)** This paper presented a concise overview of the Ayurvedic system and some of the challenges it faces, especially regarding the verification of drugs. **Thomas Mathew (2016)** This article is about Dabur India Ltd., a global leader in ayurvedic products. The author analyzed how Dabur maintains its competitive edge by expanding its new categories in the FMCG sector with innovative programs in different regions

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the relationship between purchasing Ayurvedic products and the influence of taste on purchasing decisions, the importance of perceived health benefits, and the perception of Ayurvedic products.
2. To analyze the correlation between the factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products and the perception of the consumers.

HYPOTHESES**Null Hypothesis 01**

H01: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products, the influence of taste on purchasing decisions, the importance of perceived health benefits, and perception of Ayurvedic products.

Null Hypothesis 02

H00: There is no significant correlation between factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products and perception about Ayurvedic products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on the primary data collected from 61 respondents taking into consideration the filled questionnaires. To analyze the consumer's perception of the use of ayurvedic products, a structured questionnaire was used with a five-point Likert scale. The data was collected in Mumbai using non-probability convenient sampling. The study was based on the responses. To supplement primary data, secondary data was collected from sources like journal articles, theses, and reference books. To prove the hypotheses, Linear Regression and Correlation matrix is used.

RESULT ANALYSIS:**A) DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE RESPONDENTS**

- **Monthly income:** The most common monthly income bracket is ₹10,000-₹30,000, with 34% of respondents falling into this category. The next most common bracket is ₹50,000-₹1 lakh, with 28% of respondents. Only 16% of respondents reported a monthly income of ₹1 lakh or more.
- **Age:** The vast majority of respondents (93%) were aged 18-28. There were very few respondents in the 40-50 age group.
- **Education:** Nearly half of the respondents (49%) were graduates, while 29% had a postgraduate degree. Only 20% had a high school diploma or equivalent or less.
- **Gender:** The survey was fairly evenly split between men and women, with 52% of respondents being male and 48% being female.
- **Marital status:** The majority of respondents (85%) were single, while 10% were married and 5% were in a relationship.
- **Employment status:** Most of the respondents (84%) were students, while 10% were employed in private or public institutions and 5% were self-employed. There was only one unemployed respondent.

- **Place of residence:** The majority of respondents (59%) lived in the central suburbs of Mumbai, while 13% lived in Greater Mumbai, 21% lived in the western suburbs, and 7% lived in South Mumbai.

B) Use of Ayurvedic products

Based on the provided data, here are some interpretations:

1. **Frequency of Purchasing Ayurvedic Products:** The majority of respondents (60.7%) purchase Ayurvedic products sometimes, indicating that they do not buy them consistently. This suggests that while there is interest in Ayurvedic products, they may not be the primary choice for regular consumption for many individuals.
2. **Perceived Growth Patterns Compared to Conventional Products:** Respondents are split in their perceptions of the growth patterns of Ayurvedic products compared to conventional products. However, a significant portion (36.1%) believe that Ayurvedic products are experiencing faster growth, indicating a growing trend towards their adoption and acceptance.
3. **Influence of Taste on Purchasing Decision:** Taste appears to moderately influence purchasing decisions for a significant portion of respondents (31.1%). However, a slight majority (50.8%) are only slightly influenced by taste, indicating that other factors may play a more significant role in their decision-making process.
4. **Impact of Packaging on Perception of Quality and Effectiveness:** A majority of respondents (75.4%) are influenced to some extent by the packaging of Ayurvedic products, with 41.0% stating that it moderately impacts their perception of quality and effectiveness. This suggests that packaging plays a role in shaping consumers' perceptions and preferences for Ayurvedic products.
5. **Importance of Perceived Health Benefits:** Perceived health benefits are considered important by a significant portion of respondents, with 44.3% being neutral and 31.1% considering them very important. This indicates that consumers value the health benefits associated with Ayurvedic products when making their purchasing decisions.

C) PERCEPTION OF CONSUMERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS AYURVEDIC PRODUCTS

Table 01 Consumer Perception

Perception about Ayurvedic products	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I trust more ayurvedic medicines than any other medicines	3.3 %	4.9 %	39.3 %	31.1 %	21.3 %	3.62
These products improve my	1.6 %	4.9 %	27.9 %	42.6 %	23.0 %	3.8

overall health						
These products are less harmful than other medicines	1.6 %	4.9 %	14.8 %	32.8 %	45.9 %	4.16
Its roots are linked to ancient wisdom and our old healing tradition	1.6 %	6.6 %	16.4 %	36.1 %	39.3 %	4.05
They are safer and more affordable	3.3 %	3.3 %	36.1 %	29.5 %	27.9 %	3.75
The side effects of these products are less	3.3 %	3.3 %	24.6 %	34.4 %	34.4 %	3.93
It has solutions for all the health issues	4.9 %	13.1 %	26.2 %	31.1 %	24.6 %	3.57
It has a long-lasting impact on the health	4.9 %	4.9 %	29.5 %	34.4 %	26.2 %	3.72

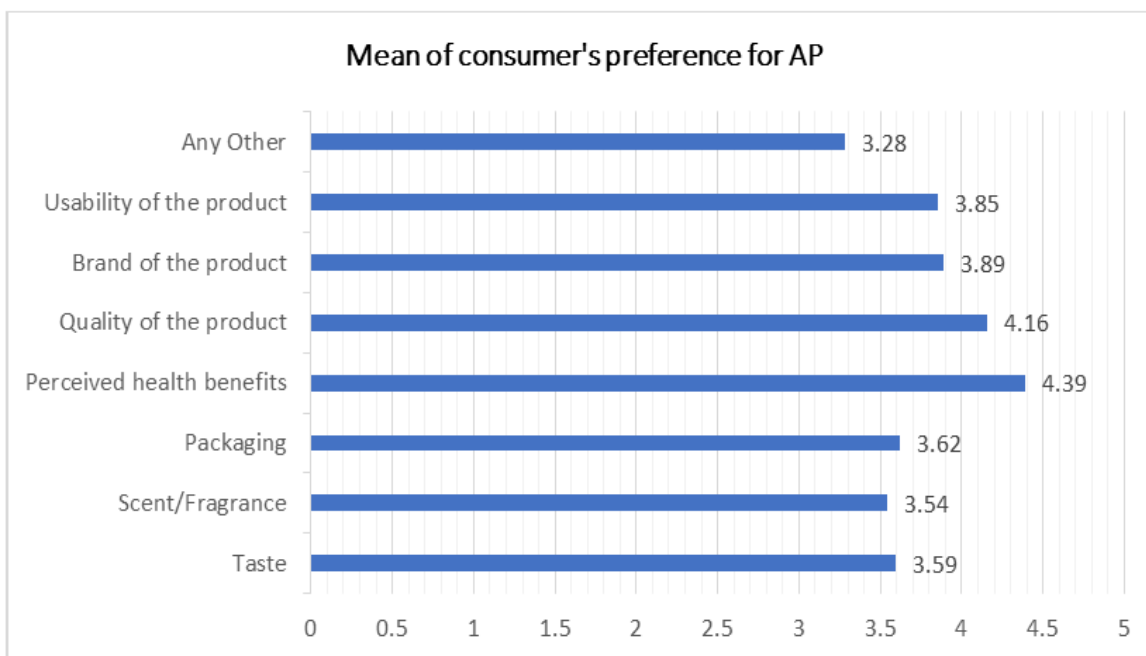
Primary Data

Based on the provided data, here are some interpretations and conclusions regarding perceptions of Ayurvedic products:

1. **Trust in Ayurvedic Medicines:** A significant portion (52.4%) of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they trust Ayurvedic medicines more than other medicines. This suggests a considerable level of confidence and trust in the efficacy and reliability of Ayurvedic treatments.
2. **Improvement in Overall Health:** A substantial majority (65.6%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurvedic products improve their overall health. This indicates a widespread belief in the holistic benefits of Ayurveda for enhancing well-being.
3. **Perceived Safety Compared to Other Medicines:** A notable majority (78.7%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurvedic products are less harmful than other medicines. This perception of safety likely contributes to the appeal of Ayurvedic treatments for health management.
4. **Rooted in Ancient Wisdom and Tradition:** A significant majority (75.4%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurvedic products are linked to ancient wisdom and traditional healing practices. This historical association may lend credibility and trustworthiness to Ayurveda among consumers.
5. **Safety and Affordability:** A considerable portion (57.5%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurvedic products are safer and more affordable. This perception aligns with the holistic and accessible nature often attributed to Ayurvedic treatments.

6. **Perceived Side Effects:** A majority (68.8%) either agree or strongly agree that the side effects of Ayurvedic products are less than those of other medicines. This perception of lower risk further reinforces the perceived safety of Ayurvedic treatments.
7. **Comprehensive Health Solutions:** While a significant portion (55.7%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurveda has a solution for all health issues, there is also a notable percentage (18%) who disagree or strongly disagree. This suggests that while Ayurveda is perceived as comprehensive by many, some individuals may have reservations about its effectiveness for all health concerns.
8. **Long-lasting Impact on Health:** A notable majority (60.6%) either agree or strongly agree that Ayurvedic products have a long-lasting impact on health. This perception indicates a belief in the sustained benefits of Ayurvedic treatments over time.

D) FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER'S PREFERENCE FOR AYURVEDIC PREFERENCE



Primary Data

Based on the provided data, here are some interpretations and conclusions:

1. **Perceived Health Benefits:** This is the most significant factor influencing the preference for Ayurvedic products, with 59% strongly agreeing and 29.5% agreeing. Ayurvedic products are often chosen for their perceived health benefits, which include natural ingredients and holistic wellness approaches.
2. **Quality of the Product:** Quality is also a strong factor, with 42.6% agreeing and 37.7% strongly agreeing. This suggests that consumers prioritize the effectiveness and reliability of Ayurvedic products.

3. **Brand of the Product:** While still important, the brand seems to have less influence compared to perceived health benefits and product quality. However, it still holds significant weight, with 42.6% agreeing and 26.2% strongly agreeing that it affects their preference.
4. **Packaging:** Packaging plays a notable role as well, with 49.2% agreeing and 13.1% strongly agreeing. This indicates that attractive and well-designed packaging can positively influence consumers' choices.
5. **Usability of the Product:** Usability is moderately influential, with 45.9% agreeing and 26.2% strongly agreeing. Consumers appreciate products that are easy to use and integrate into their daily routines.
6. **Scent/Fragrance:** Although still important, scent/fragrance appears to be less influential compared to other factors, with 47.5% agreeing and 9.8% strongly agreeing.
7. **Taste:** Taste seems to be the least influential factor, with only 31.1% agreeing and 21.3% strongly agreeing. This might be because Ayurvedic products such as herbal supplements or skincare items are not primarily consumed for taste.
8. **Any Other Factor:** A significant portion (41%) of respondents agree that there are other factors influencing their preference for Ayurvedic products, suggesting that individual preferences and unique product attributes may also play a role.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products, the influence of taste on purchasing decisions, the importance of perceived health benefits, and perception of Ayurvedic products.

Result:

The linear regression model was conducted to analyze the relationship between the perception of Ayurvedic products and several independent variables including the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products, the influence of taste on purchasing decisions, and the importance of perceived health benefits in choosing Ayurvedic products over alternatives. The overall model was found to be significant ($F(3, 57) = 8.81, p < .001$) with an R^2 of 0.317, indicating that approximately 31.7% of the variance in perception of Ayurvedic products was explained by the included predictors. Looking at the individual predictors, the omnibus ANOVA test revealed that the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products ($F(1, 57) = 19.13, p < .001$) and the importance of perceived health benefits ($F(1, 57) = 4.85, p = 0.032$) were significant predictors, whereas the influence of taste on purchasing decisions did not reach significance ($F(1, 57) = 1.01, p = 0.319$). Upon examining the model coefficients for perception about Ayurvedic products, it was found that the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products ($\beta = 0.484, p < .001$) and the importance of perceived health benefits ($\beta = 0.242, p = 0.032$) had positive and significant relationships with perception. However, the influence of taste on purchasing decisions did not significantly contribute to the perception of Ayurvedic products ($\beta = 0.111, p = 0.319$).

Linear Regression						
Model Fit Measures						
			Overall Model Test			
Model	R	R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.563	0.317	8.81	3	57	< .001

Omnibus ANOVA Test						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	
Frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products.	276.3	1	276.3	19.13	< .001	
Influence of taste on purchasing decision for Ayurvedic products.	14.6	1	14.6	1.01	0.319	
Importance of perceived health benefits in choosing Ayurvedic products over alternatives.	70	1	70	4.85	0.032	
Residuals	823.6	57	14.4			
<i>Note.</i> Type 3 sum of squares						

Model Coefficients - Perception about ayurvedic products							
			95% Confidence Interval				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	11.695	2.678	6.3328	17.06	4.37	< .001	
Frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products.	2.355	0.538	1.2765	3.43	4.37	< .001	0.484
Influence of taste on purchasing decision for Ayurvedic products.	0.646	0.642	- 0.6407	1.93	1.01	0.319	0.111
Importance of perceived health benefits in choosing Ayurvedic products over alternatives.	1.064	0.483	0.0962	2.03	2.2	0.032	0.242

H0: There is no significant correlation between factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products and perception about Ayurvedic products.

Result:

The correlation matrix indicates a strong positive correlation between factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products and perception of Ayurvedic products ($r = 0.659$, $p < .001$). This suggests that as the factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products increase, individuals' perceptions about Ayurvedic products also tend to increase. Similarly, as perceptions about Ayurvedic products improve, the factors influencing preference for these products also tend to increase.

Correlation Matrix			
		Factors influence preference for Ayurvedic product	Perception about Ayurvedic products
Factors influence preference for Ayurvedic product	Pearson's r	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
Perception about Ayurvedic products	Pearson's r	0.659	—
	df	59	—
	p-value	< .001	—
	N	61	—
<i>Note.</i> * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$			

CONCLUSION

- It is observed that Ayurvedic products are not purchased consistently by the majority of respondents, there is a growing trend towards their adoption. Factors such as perceived health benefits and packaging play significant roles in shaping consumers' perceptions and preferences for Ayurvedic products
- It was also observed that consumers of Ayurvedic products are primarily influenced by perceived health benefits and product quality, followed by factors such as brand, packaging, usability, scent, and taste. Brands in this industry should focus on highlighting the health benefits and quality of their products while also considering packaging and usability to appeal to consumer preferences.
- It is observed that the frequency of purchasing Ayurvedic products and the perceived health benefits significantly influence individuals' perceptions of Ayurvedic products. However, the influence of taste on purchasing decisions does not appear to have a significant impact on perception.

- It is observed that the findings suggest a mutually reinforcing relationship between the factors influencing preference for Ayurvedic products and perceptions about Ayurvedic products. As individuals' perceptions about Ayurvedic products improve, they may become more inclined to be influenced by factors that promote their preference for these products.

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