

Relationship between socio-economic variables and preference towards herbal-based products: the Malay experience

ABSTRACT

Herbal-based products are getting popular in Malaysia especially among Malays due to their claimed benefits. However, some Malay consumers prefer not to consume herbal-based products for many reasons. The objective of this study is to determine consumers' perception towards herbal-based products as an alternative medicine. A total of 150 Malay respondents were selected to take part in this study. Face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire were carried out to get responses among the respondents in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The results revealed that *Eurycoma longifolia* Jack (Tongkat Ali) was the most preferred herb among the majority followed by *Orthosiphon aristatus* (Misai Kuching), *Labisia pumila* (Kacip Fatimah) and *Centella asiatica* (Pegaga). *Ficus deltoidea* (Mas Cotek) was the least preferred herb among the respondents in this study. Most of the herbal-based products were consumed as a source of energy, for health and fitness, to cure sickness and disease and for enhancing beauty. This study provides some information on the perception towards herbal-based products consumption among Malay consumers.

Keyword: *Centella asiatica*; Consumer preference; *Eurycoma longifolia* Jack; *Ficus deltoidea*; Herbal medicines; *Labisia pumila*; *Orthosiphon aristatus*