



CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USAGE OF HERBAL PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Herbal product is commonly used worldwide for many purpose such as for health care or cosmetics. Then, attitude is one of the main factor that change consumer towards the usage of herbal product. Thus, as marketer it is important to know consumer attitude towards the usage of herbal product. This study were conducted to analyse the level knowledge and beliefs, the association between socio-demographic with the usage of herbal products and the factor that influence consumer based on marketing mix. There are several of factors that effect on consumer attitude. A survey was conducted in Ipoh, Perak involving 400 respondents. The structure of questionnaire were closed ended question, multiple choice question and Likert scale question. Data was analysed by using descriptive analysis, mean score, chi-square and factor analysis. Results show that many consumer consume herbal products instead of modern alternatives. Results indicates that most respondents were satisfied with the outcome of herbal products. The level of knowledge and beliefs among the consumer effect on consumer attitude towards the usage of herbal products. Marketing mix influence consumer's usage towards herbal products. There is need in improvement the safety of herbal products. Promoting campaign can be done to attract consumer to buy herbal products.

ABSTRAK

Produk herba biasanya digunakan di seluruh dunia untuk pelbagai tujuan seperti penjagaan kesihatan atau kosmetik. Maka sikap adalah salah satu faktor utama yang mengubah pengguna terhadap penggunaan produk herba. Oleh itu, sebagai pemasar penting untuk mengetahui sikap pengguna terhadap penggunaan produk herba. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menganalisis tahap pengetahuan dan kepercayaan, persatuan antara sosio-demografi dengan penggunaan produk herba dan faktor yang mempengaruhi pengguna berdasarkan campuran pemasaran. Terdapat beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi sikap pengguna. Satu tinjauan telah dijalankan di Ipoh, Perak yang melibatkan 400 responden. Struktur soalan adalah dalam soalan tertutup, soalan pilihan berganda dan soalan skala Likert. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif, skor min, chi-square dan analisis faktor. Oleh itu, hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa ramai pengguna menggunakan produk herba dan bukannya menggunakan alternatif moden. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan responden berpuas hati dengan hasil produk herba. Tahap pengetahuan dan kepercayaan di kalangan pengguna memberi kesan terhadap sikap pengguna terhadap penggunaan produk herba. Campuran pemasaran mempengaruhi penggunaan pengguna terhadap produk herba. Terdapat keperluan untuk memperbaiki keselamatan produk herba. Kempen promosi boleh dilakukan untuk menarik pengguna membeli produk herba.

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DECLARATION FORM

This project report entitled “Consumer Attitudes towards the Usage of Herbal Products is prepared by SHAHIDA NURAIN BINTI AHMAD AMMAR (179492) with I.C Number 950123085964 and submitted to the Faculty of Agriculture in fulfilment of the requirement of PPT 4999B (Final Year Project) for the award of the degree of Bachelor Science Agribusiness.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Herbs

Herbs is defined as any plant with leaves, seeds or flowers used for flavouring, food, medicine or perfume. In Cambridge dictionary define that herbs is a type of plant whose leaves are used in cooking to give flavour to particular dishes or in making medicine. Some opinion said that herbal is a plant or part of a plant that people use to try to stay healthy or to threat health conditions and illnesses. Based on the history of herbalism established that herbs have already been around a very long time ago. Herbal products or herbal medicines is a products made from botanicals used to maintain or improve health (Sekhri, Bhanwra & Nandha, 2013).

1.2 Background of Herbal Industry

Phenomenon the use of plant as an herbs or source of medicines is not new to the global society. Before modern medicines discovered, the previous generations have used different kind of plant as medicine in the traditional treatment for different disease and illness. In the market, herbal product can be found in various shape, types, taste and colour. For example, in tablet, herbal supplement beverages, ointment, massage oil and many more. In fact, products that made from botanical and used to maintain or improve health called as herbal products or herbal medicine (Sekhri, 2013). Also, the increasing demand in herbal supplements, health functional foods, herbs-based energy drinks and skin cares contribute to the growing trend in herbal industry. Because of the herbal based supplements is said as safer alternatives compared with allopathic medication, there is increases demand for alternative medicinal products. Also same with the need for intake of health supplements for health maintenance and diseases prevention (Ahmad, 2015).

1.3 Herbal Industry in Malaysia

Malaysia's herbal industry is fast growing where as people started to realize the benefits come from herbal plants. People can accept the existence of herbal plants not only for health care but also in other ways such as skin care, cooking, soothing and be as an exhibition. In fact, Malaysia rich with mega biodiversity with natural flora and fauna that more than a thousand plants where each of them containing medicinal values. The growers of herbal plants were mainly in Pahang, Johor and Perak. Herbs plantation acreage is projected to increase from 1000 ha in 2010 to 4000 ha in 2020 for the national scale (Ahmad, 2015). In 2020, the Ministry of the Natural resources and environment estimates around RM29 billion of the herbal local market will expand by 15% a year from RM17 billion in 2010. Based on the survey that conducted in 2012 by Forest research and Institute Malaysia (FRIM) stated that household in Malaysia consuming herbal products around 73% is lower compared with 80% estimated by the WHO for developing country. There is significant increase in products of downstream activities that shown good performance that being registered with NPBC under traditional is use and for general health.

Malaysian herbs are classified in several groups which are flavours and fragrance such as cosmetics, perfumes, oil for aroma, essential oil and beverages, pharmaceuticals or herbal like remedies or drugs and vitamins or supplements, health or functional food such as health food, herbal teas and herbal supplement and bio-pesticides such as insect repellent, crop pesticide and household pesticide (Ahmad and Othman, 2015). In Malaysia, herbal industry was started under the project of Entry Point Project (EPP) in early 2011. Because of the huge economic potential and local heritage in herbal knowledge, Malaysia started the value herbal products under the Economic Transformation Program (ETP) (Ahmad, 2015).

Malaysia practices two categories of herbal trade namely entreport trade and lower activity such as the provision of raw materials or herbal product business. Entreport business is the most prominent business. Raw materials or products obtained from different places of origin will be repackaged or compiled into new products for sale either domestically or in a third world country. Most domestic suppliers of raw materials or products typically export their merchandise on orders. Among the popular local herb products and from the home country exported from Malaysia are “Tongkat Ali”, “Kacip Fatimah”, “Misai Kucing”, Noni juice, Herbal Tea and gaharu oil. The manufacturing industry has the potential to generate new uses from local raw materials as the number of entrepreneurs in herbal extraction is high. Besides, Malaysia imported about more than 90% from raw materials that used in the manufacture of herbal products from Indonesia, India and China (Ibrahim and Khozirah, 1996).

Malaysia is reported to have approximately 1300 species of plants with medicinal value. About 200 of them are used as herbal medicines and about 50 species are used in traditional medicine preparations. The use of herbs comes from plant extracts and in their active ingredient form. On the other hand, among the well-known markets to export the Malaysian herbs are the United States, Europe, Japan, China and Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, classification of herbal products marketed internationally is the aroma of chemicals, flavours and fragrance compositions and essential oils and natural extracts. Each market differs due to different needs.

The categories are sourced from extracts, raw materials or from manufactured products. Market requirements necessitate carbon cycle records, industry standards and official endorsement.

For US commercial markets, plant extracts are used in the food and fragrance industries, while in the pharmaceutical industry, the extracts are for flavourings and palatability. The market requires ultra-clean, verifiable, high quality products, reliable suppliers and competitive prices. Low-cost suppliers such as from India and People’s Republic of China (PRC), pose serious problem of profitability to Malaysian herbal traders when trading internationally due to their

competitive pricing. Europe constitutes a large segment of the market whilst the USA and Japan are trailing behind. PRC and the former Soviet Union or Eastern Europe may likely influence the supply and demand of herbal materials due to their pursuit for hard currency.

When dealing with the international markets, it is necessary to consider the existence of synthetic compound in relation to natural products. In which case there will be product adulteration especially when the price of synthetic substitutes is less than that of natural products (Globinmed, 2018).

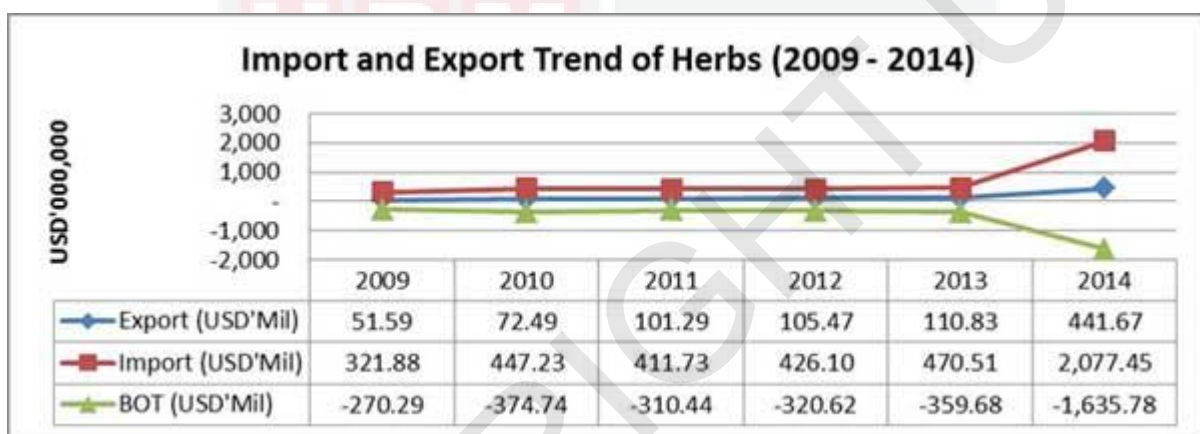


Figure 1.1: Trends import and export of herbs in year of 2009 until 2014

Trade symbolizes the herbal industry in Malaysia is growing rapidly. In 2009 until 2014, the annual growth rate for herbs trading value was 45% for imports and 54% for export. In 2014, the highest value of imports and exports was USD2077 million and US\$ 441.7 million respectively. Figure 1 above shows the trend of import and export of herbs from 2009 until 2014. Most of the imported materials are used for the local market. Malaysia become a net importer of herbal products for import and export value. Most of the sources come mainly from China, Singapore and India where it is imported by traditional Chinese, Malay and Indian traders. The value and amount of raw materials used by the domestic herbal industry is enormous. It is very well if Malaysia wants to develop a comprehensive master plan that

reduces importation and increases exports as well as improves trade balance (all paragraph) (PERKEM, 2015).

1.4 Issues Regarding Herbal Products

There are a lot of issues appear regarding herbal products in the media social such as Internet, WhatsApp and Facebook. All these issues not only happened in Malaysia but it also occur in other countries. As we know, being a natural plants does not mean it cannot gives harmful to human life. It is shows to herbs plant. Even herbs have many benefits however if there are irresponsible in producing and regulating of herbs, it can causes the negative side effect.

One of the issue is the perceived effectiveness of the herbal products. Someone who takes herbal medicines which is one of the herbal product's classification without knowledge about the product is expose to get risk. Another issues that appear is the consumption of herbal products without providers' recommendation. Generally, after consumers consume of herbal medicines, they need to see healthcare providers or practitioners to get advised from them. It is because to know whether herbal medicine that they consume can give side effect, suitable or not for them to consume. Basically, herbal medicine is used to treat various diseases but there is a studied shows vice versa about the efficacy and effects of herbal products which is mixed result. For example herbal remedies, which it be said that containing complex mixtures of organic. Besides it can cause many adverse effects due to their active ingredients or interactions with conventional drugs that sometimes can effect life. The number of drug or disease interactions involving herbal products and dietary supplements have been documented in the literature (Marinac et al., 2007).

Although, some herbal product is lack of regulation. The quality of herbal products in the market maybe different due to the differences in brands, batches or manufacturers. This will make more difficult to prescribe the proper dose of an herb in the product. Because of herbal products are not tightly regulated, consumers easily prone with the risk of buying inferior quality herbs. This is also supported by one of the researcher said that there is no regulations or legal standards that apply to harvesting, processing or packaging of herbal products until now (Sekhri, Bhanwra and Nandha, 2013). They also reported that in United Kingdom, the initiative was taken by display a traditional herbal registration (THR) certification mark on the product packaging of the herbal remedies. It is used to shows the safety, quality and evidence of the herbal products (Sekhri, Bhanwra and Nandha, 2013).

Unfortunately, in Malaysia, the analytical control in ensuring the high quality of herbal products in allowing from reach to market still do not strict. Herbal products which have not been included in standard pharmacopoeias are still allowed to be market to the general public (Jantan and Ibrahim, 2006). According to research have been done stated that herbal products is less strict in regulation than of drugs so that it requiring less evidence on safety and efficacy. On other hand, even though without clinical trials that evaluate efficacy and safety of herbs, it can be marketed (Alkhateeb, Pharm and Doucette et al., 2006).

Furthermore, herbs are considered as food products because of them are not serve to the same scrutiny and regulations as traditional medications. Not only that, there is a research shows that some herbal health products and supplements may not be safe to use for pregnant women or breastfeeding. It is also can increased risk of adverse effects from these products for children and older adults because their bodies process the ingredients differently. The public belief with the widespread about the botanicals that is harmless because they are natural products.

However, according to the emerging research stated that there are interactions whether for both prescriptions drugs and clinical conditions or one of them from the serious repercussions.

It is also show the effect to the person that having surgery. It is important for the patients to tell the doctor about any herbal health products and supplements that used. These products may cause problems with surgery including bleeding problems with anaesthesia. It is better if the patients stop using herbal health products or supplements at least two weeks before the surgery or based on the recommendation by doctors. Being natural sources does not mean it cannot harmful side-effects or adverse interactions with other medication. In addition, the safety and efficacy of herbal products are not required to demonstrate by the manufacturers and distributors before placing on the market (Silvani Zaffani, Laura Cuzzolin and Giuseppina, 2006).

1.5 Problem Statement

People nowadays begin to realise the benefits from herbs plant. There is a time, when the use of herbs is said to be ancient and was considered to be trivial or difficult in its preparation. Even so, changing in times make herbaceous plants are becoming increasingly popular and be the preferences of choice among the consumer because of it is natural and safe properties to be used. If previously, people only know the herbs used to treat of diseases and heal wounds but its uses now was widespread and not just rely on meditational only. Now the trends in using herbal products were change and begin to increase over year by year after the marketer making innovations into herbs plant. For example, uses of herbs in cosmetics, vitamin or supplements, as a tea and for aromatherapy. So, as the marketer it is an opportunity for them to produce based on consumer needs and wants with the ways of they care about their health.

In the market there are various types of herbal products that sell by the marketer. Each of the herbal products come from different company, organization or firm with variety of taste, size,

colour, brands, prices, classification and so on. Example herbal products in Malaysia are Brand's Essence of Chicken, Blackmores, Himalaya, Kordel's and Bio-Life. Because of there are too many kinds of herbal products in Malaysia, there is criticism about the adverse reaction or side-effect and inadequate information's about the herbal products. For instance, some people having experience of bad effect after taking herbal products which is herbal medicines or some people may cause problem when taking with other medicines. So, this study is come out to investigate the consumer attitude towards the usage of herbal products. In order to know the association between respondent's socio-demographic and the usage of herbal products, the level knowledge and beliefs of consumer towards herbal products and lastly to evaluate the factor that affecting consumer towards herbal products.

1.6 Research Question

- I. How much consumer knowledge and beliefs about herbal products?
- II. Do socio-demographic have an association with the usage of herbal product?
- III. Do marketing mix influence consumer towards herbal products?

1.7 Objective of the Study

1.7.1 General objective

To investigate the consumer's attitude towards the usage of herbal products

1.7.2 Specific objectives

- I. To analyse respondent's attitude and beliefs towards the usage of herbal products.
- II. To evaluate the association between socio-demographic characteristics with the usage of herbal products.
- III. To analyse factor based on marketing mix that influencing consumer's towards the usage of herbal products.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is conducted to enhance knowledge among the consumer in using herbal products. Some of people may use the herbal products because of the people around them however they actually did not really know about herbal products. If they know, only a few percent of knowledge that they have about herbal product. Not many people know that herbal product not only can be used as medicines but it also can be a skin care product, oil and also as a soap. Besides, this study can help government to reduce the problem and issues related with the use and safety of herbal products. As we know, herbal industry product are lack in regulation. Because of that, some people feel hesitant to use herbal products. So, from this study government can know the level knowledge and attitude of consumer about herbal products. So that people who buy the herbal product have protection because the regulation that government made. This research also may helping marketer to improve their quality of herbal product based on the consumer preferences and knowledge.

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