Perceived Quality and Purchase Intentions of Trado-Medical Firms in Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study examined perceived quality and purchase intentions of trado-medical firms in Rivers State. This study adopted the causal effect approach with major predictive variable "Perceived Quality (PQ) and major criterion variable as Purchase Intention (PI)." The population of the study consists of customers of the eight registered trado-medical firms in Rivers State. The population of this study is infinite; hence, Krejce and Morgan table was used to arrive at the sample size of the study. The sample size is 380. The stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw 380 respondents and data for the study was collected through a 15 item questionnaire administered to the respondents. A total of three hundred and eighty (380) copies of the questionnaires produced were distributed to the respondents. Of the 380 copies of questionnaire that were distributed to the respondents, 350 copies were returned, yielding a response rate of 92%. The returned usable rate of 92% was considered sufficient for the analysis. Data analysis consists of descriptive and inferential statistics which were carried out principally with the aid of computer using SPSS version 22.0 package. The inferential statistics used was the multiple linear regressions. The results demonstrate that the components of perceived quality (product taste, product safety and dosage accuracy) investigated by this study positively and significantly influence purchase intention. The study therefore, concludes that, perceived quality significantly influences purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State, and recommends that, in order to boost perceived quality, the management of trado-medical firms should design perceived quality furthering programs in terms of product taste, product safety and dosage accuracy to enhance affirmative purchase intentions for their organizations.*

Keywords: *Dosage accuracy, Perceived quality, Product safety, Product taste, Purchase intentions.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, there have been enormous increases in use of herbal products crosswise the world. Just about 80% of the world's population, particularly those in developing countries, uses herbal medicines as part of their primary health care needs (Ekor, 2014; Thakur *et al.,* 2011). Herbal products constitute plants, parts of plants or extracts from plants that are utilized in healthcare or in combating the

disease. These are 'herbal medicinal products' (Mukherjee & Houghten, 2009). Most of the plants being used in modern times can be said to have been in place centuries ago and its usage in restricted parts of the world, but the enhancements in global travels and communications have brought about the abundant use of these plants worldwide (Mukhejee, 2015).

Trado-medical firms are made up of traditional medicine/practitioners who are indigenous native healers that regularly addressed as herbalists, traditional birth attendants, traditional surgeons and the bone setters (Adesina, 2011). Traditional medicine practitioners normally employ vegetables, mineral substances, animal parts and assured supplementary techniques such as prayers, divinations and incantations (Owumi & Jerome, 2008) in their healing practice.

In spite of the great advances observed in modern medicine in recent decades, plants still make an important contribution to health care (Kinghorn, 2002). It is therefore, clear as crystal that traditional medicine is a huge market noticeable to its growing fame and it constituting a considerable fraction of the global market value a projected at $83 billion in 2008 (World Health Organization, 2011). Traditional medicine has a high patronage because it is; cheaper, extra suitable and now and then professed to be additionally effectual principally in Sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2007); Voice of America News, 2006; UN Millennium Project, 2005). However, despite significant contributions of traditional medicine to the health care system, its connection to customer purchase intention is still very indistinguishable.

Purchase intention is a personal behavioral inclination to a given product, illuminating the likelihood that a customer will buy that product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979; Dodds *et al.,* 1991). Purchase intention therefore, echoes as an assurance of re-purchase of a product at a subsequent trip. This is because it is a premeditated conducts that a consumer inclined to buy a product that he is convinced of, given the fact that, purchase intention serves as a significant indicator that speculates consumer behavior. Purchase intention is the keenness of consumers to make a commercial contract with a retailer, based on the perceived quality of what is being offered for sale.

Perceived quality can be defined as the opinionated response to copious unequivocal uniqueness of a product (Calvo 2002). It represents consumers' judgement of inbuilt distinctiveness (Richard, 1996). Perceived quality is according to Zeithaml (1988) is "the consumer's judgment about the superiority or excellence of a product". May, Yoon and Kim (2011) affirm that "perceived quality refers to customer's evaluation of a product or a brand that meet an individual's expectation". Perceived quality is therefore, the consumer's decision regarding the dominance or distinction of a product, and this distinctiveness metamorphous in this study in terms of product taste, product safety and dosage accuracy.

Some Scholarly inquiries on perceived quality and purchase intentions have accumulated. For instance, Teng *et al.* (2019) studied insights on preferred herbs, perception and predictors of herbal use for health among Malay women in Malaysia Siregnr, Supriana and Haryanti (2018) analyzed the influence of consumers' perception on the consumption of traditional medicinal plants. Utama *et al.* (2016) examined the interactive effect of consumer animosity and perceived quality, Calvo-Porral and Lévy-Mangin (2016)

empirically tested a conceptual model of the influence of perceived product quality of store brands relative to perceived value and purchase intention. Wee *et al.* (2014) studied consumers' perception, purchase intention and actual purchase behavior of organic food products in Malaysia.

These previous studies have somewhat disregarded the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention in the context of trado-medical practice, because empirical examinations on the connections between the implicit variables are not echoed in this context, and in this field of research that this present study is framed, the main objective is to carry out an analysis of the direct effects of perceived quality on purchase intention. Consequently, this study aims at filling up the research gap and makes available a hardheaded authentication on the connections between perceived quality and purchase intention. Based on this concern, this study explores the nexus between perceived quality and purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is anchored on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was generated from Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and as an existing theory, it explicates and discloses the motivational influences on individual behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour has been extensively applied to envisage the behavioural objective and genuine behaviour of an individual (Madden *et al.,* 1992; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Theory of Planned Behavior stresses the association between beliefs and behavior and has been used in studies of the relation among beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior is used in this study to examine perceived quality and purchase intentions of trado-medical firms' products. These behaviors are examined in term of how consumers' perceived of product safety, product taste and dosage accuracy and proceed to make purchase intention.

The Concept of Perceived Quality

Quality is delineated as appraisal of distinction and pre-eminence of the product (Zeithaml, 1988). Quality is alienated in to objective of quality and perception of quality (Anselmsson & Persson, 2007). The objective of quality is the estimation of the product anchored on substantial uniqueness, whereas perception of quality reflects on prejudiced details which are consumers' assessment of the product and judgment that are anchored on several features. Richardson (1996) asserts that quality perception decides consumer inclination to buy a private brand.

Calvo (2002) defined perceived quality as the opinionated response to many explicit distinctiveness of a product, while Richard (1996) labeled perceived quality as consumers' conclusion of inherent characteristics such as taste, ingredients, nutrition value and general quality. Similarly, Zeithaml (1988) sees perceived quality as "the consumer's judgement about the superiority or excellence of a product". As well, May, Yoon and Kim (2011) proclaimed that "perceived quality refers to customer's evaluation of a

product or a brand that meet an individual's expectation", This study classifies perceived quality as the consumer's decision concerning the supremacy or peculiarity of a product as perceived in terms of the discernments and anticipations of consumers anchored on their appraisal of a definite product's characteristics.

Since product quality assessment contemplation is calculated by the consumers not by firms, the exact perceived quality attributes prioritization for a trado-medical firms' products will lead to a successful design and customers' appreciation of trado-medical product safety, product taste and dosage accuracy. This study therefore, adopts product safety, product taste and dosage accuracy as the dimensions of perceived quality.

Product Taste

Taste, is an essential factor when settling on decision on a certain drug from the non-specific products accessible in the market that have similar vigorous ingredient. Taste estimation is a crucial factor for decisive reception of drugs by patients. Presently, practitioners are discerning the enormity of taste camouflaging and a substantial quantity of methods has been generated for casing up the nauseating taste (Sohi, Sultana & Khar, 2004). The taste of a drug is a prime contributor of patient's acceptability and conformity, since virtually all drugs have a bitter taste. Schiffman and Zervakis (1983) confirmed that, many of drugs rouse harsh or bitter taste sensation enclosed by seconds to minutes when managed by the intra vascular relatively than the oral course. Drugs not only stimulate tastes of their own but can also disorder typical indications from other taste stimuli, so the palatability of the vigorous component of a drug is a remarkable hindrance in developing a patient reception of dosage form.

Dosage Accuracy

The stability of an herbal paste depends on the type of base used as well as the nature of the herbal material incorporated (Al-Achi, 2008; Bouwman *et al.,* 2015). Therefore, careful scientific evaluation of dosage accuracy is essential before herbal medicines can be officially incorporated into primary healthcare systems and before there can be global acceptance of their health benefits. What is required is a centralized, focused approach to providing accurate and up-to-date scientific information on commonly used herbal medicines.

Product Safety

Product safety refers to the diminution in the likelihood that use of a product will affect illness, injury, death or negative outcomes to persons, property or equipment. Product safety implies that the product may be consumed, actually entrenched into the body, or positioned into substantial use without any harm. Safety is an elemental principle in the provision of herbal medicines and herbal products for health care, and a decisive constituent of quality control. These guiding principles provide practical technical guidance for keeping an eye on the safety of herbal medicines contained by pharmacovigilance systems (WHO, 2004).

The Concept of Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the eagerness of consumers to make a business deal with a retailer. It mirrors as a guarantee to one's self to re-purchase a product on one's subsequent outing (Fandos & Flavian, 2006; Halim & Hameed, 2005). Purchase intention is a premeditated conducts that a consumer disposed to buy convinced product (Ajzen, 1992). Purchase intention has been contended to be the most significant pointer to conjecture consumer behavior. Purchase intention is an available apparatus in envisaging purchasing process. Consumers who are influenced by advertisement transfer their interests to the other product which advertises the products (Hashim & Muhammad, 2013). Besides, consumers who purchase the product recurrently refuse to give in to changing to other brand. Purchase intention might be altered owing to the influence of price, quality perception and value perception (Zeithaml, 1988; Grewal *et al.,* 1998). However, once the consumers make up their minds to acquire a product in a distinct store, they will be motivated by their intention but, consumers will be interrupted by internal impulse and external environment during purchasing process.

Empirical Review

Tengk *et al.* (2019) studied insights on preferred herbs, perception and predictors of herbal use for health among Malay women in Malaysia, using a cross-sectional survey, embracing Malay women in all fourteen states in Malaysia. Data was analyzed by means of a multivariate logistic regression model. The result confirmed that: a total of 1067 respondents were included in the study of which 592 (55.5%) acknowledge to using herbs for health. In general, raw herbs were the most preferred herbal remedies used. A significantly higher number of respondents perceived that herbal remedies would not cause any problems to women's overall health although a large majority agreed that not all remedies were safe for pregnant women. Among predictors of herbal use were marital status and income. Those that were married were 3.9 times more likely to use herbs than unmarried women. Having an income of less than RM 3000 or USD 729 increased the odds of using herbs among women by 6.2 times compared to their counterparts. The study recommended that, health educational programs on herbal use should be developed that deal with these concerns to guarantee correct information is conveyed.

Leonika (2017) examined the influence of perceived quality, perceived price and perceived value on consumer purchase intention in traditional fabrics using 100 randomly surveyed customers of Kaeng Manado as respondents. The multiple linear regressions through the aid of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. It was revealed that perceived value has no significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

Feng and Yu (2016) investigated the interactive effect of consumer animosity on perceived quality by means of a two-by-two experimental design, and hypotheses tested through a specific Japanese automobile brand among Chinese consumers. The result revealed a strong interactive effect between consumer animosity and perceived quality: for a high-quality product, but an insignificant effect of consumer animosity on product judgement and purchase intention. On the contrary, for a low-quality brand, the study established a negative effect of consumer animosity on both of the same attitude and behavior variables.

Builders *et al.,* 2015) surveyed the pharmaceutical quality of herbal medicines sold in Nigeria using samples of sixteen frequently used herbal products collected from Pharmacy stores and Patent Medicine stores of two states and the Federal Capital Territory. The dosage form, organoleptic properties, moisture content, weight/volume uniformity as well as compliance to regulatory guidelines were evaluated. Sixty percent of the samples constitute liquids, thirty percent were oral bulk powders and ten percent were capsules. It was found that, none of the products conformed utterly to the regulatory condition set for finished herbal products in Nigeria whereas only ten percent of the products samples conformed to the basic physicochemical properties necessary for pharmaceutical quality. Therefore, the study recommended a compelling necessity for the regulatory authorities to guarantee strict quality inspection and enforcement of guidelines to guarantee that herbal medicines are of standard quality.

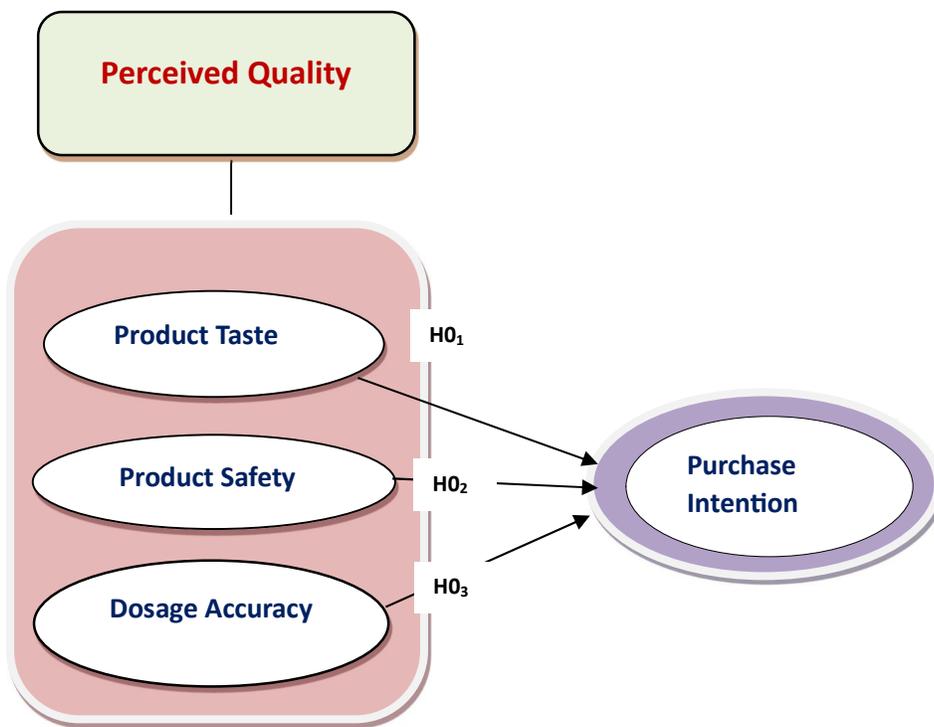From the review of literature, the following research model was formulated:

Figure 1: Research Model of Perceived Quality and Purchase Intentions.

Source: Authors Desk Research, 2023.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the causal effect approach with major predictive variable "Perceived Quality (PQ) and major criterion variable as Purchase Intention (PI)." In a causal research, it is necessary to show that one variable is predicts or determined the values of other variables. The research location is a non-contrived one for the reason that it is a natural setting and the researcher cannot maneuver the research building blocks. The population of the study consists of customers of the eight registered trado-medical firms in

Rivers State. The population of this study is infinite; hence, Krejce and Morgan table was used to arrive at the sample size of the study. The sample size is 380. The stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw 380 respondents for the study. Data for the study were collected from primary sources by means of structured questionnaire. The analysis consists of descriptive and inferential statistics which was carried out principally with the aid of computer using SPSS version 22.0 package. The inferential statistics used was the multiple linear regressions.

Reliability of the Instrument

At the end of the survey, the reliability scale was further examined by computing their coefficient alpha (Cronbach alpha). All scales were found to exceed a minimum threshold of 0.7. The exact results of the scale reliability analysis are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Shows the reliability measure of Perceived Quality and Purchase Intention   (n=200).

S/N	ITEM	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
1	Product Taste	3	750
2	Product Safety	3	742
3	Dosage Accuracy	3	703
4	Purchase Intention	3	749

Source: SPSS 22.0 Output (based on 2023 field survey data).

Table 1 summarizes the reliability result of the dimensions of perceived quality and purchase intention, which also includes the individual item reliability test. Significantly, all items are reliable and are used to study perceived quality and purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State. The extent of the association between perceived quality and purchase intention can be operationalised using product taste (.750) with a 3-item measure; product safety (.742) with a 3-item measure, dosage accuracy (703) with 3-item measure, and purchase intention (749) with a 3- item measure,

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data for the study were collected through a 15 item questionnaire administered to the respondents. A total of three hundred and eighty (380) copies of the questionnaires produced were distributed to the respondents. Of the 380 copies of questionnaire that were distributed to the respondents, 350 copies were returned, yielding a response rate of 92%. The remaining 30 copies produced and distributed were not returned and were unaccounted for. However, the returned usable rate of 92% was considered sufficient for the analysis.

Statistical Test of Hypothesis

Ho$_1$:   Components of perceived quality have no significant effect on purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State.

Decision rule: Accept Ho: if P-value > 0.05, otherwise reject it and accept the HA: if P-value < 0.05.

Table 2: Effect of Components of Perceived Quality on Purchase Intention (n=350).

Model Summary

Model	R	R2	Adj R2	Std Error of The Estimate	F Change	dfi	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin Watson
PT	.857	.764	.762			1	348		
PS	.667	.568	.565	.64079	752.650			.0 00	1.869
DA	.776	.694	.681	167.596	.47649	1	349	.000	1.969
						1	350	.000	1.649
				294.73	62.504				

Source: SPSS 22.0 window output (2023)

Predictor (Constant). Product Taste (PT)

Predictor (Constant), Product Safety (PS)

Predictor (Constant), Dosage Accuracy (DA)

Dependent Variable, Purchase Intention (PI)

Three models were tested indicating three predictors besides constant to determine the dependent variable that arrange entry requirement in the finishing equation (PT, PS, PA, PI). Multiple correlation coefficient measures the degree of relationship between the actual values and predicted values. Predicted values are obtained as a linear combination of X1 (Product Taste), X2(Product Safety) and X3 (Dosage Accuracy). R2 represents percentage of the variance in the dependent variable. The result in Table 1 indicated that the P-value is 0.000. Since the P-value (0.000) < 0.05, the study accepted the alternate hypothesis and concluded that components of perceived quality have significant effect on purchase intention of trado-medical firms' products in Rivers State. Table 1 also showed that 76.4% of the variation (model 1) in purchase intention is explained by product taste single-handedly, 56.8% of the variation (model 2) is explained by product safety and 69.4% of the variation (model 3) is explained by dosage accuracy.

Test of Model Utility

Table 3: F-ratio Test of Perceived Quality and Purchase Intention (n=350).

	Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
						000[b]
1	Regression	874.476	1	874.476	I367.597	
	Residual	167.896	98	776		
	Total	1042.372	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), PT, PS, DA.

Source: SPSS Window Output, Version 22.0 (2023).

The serviceability of the overall regression statistics was tested prior to the testing of the individual hypotheses for their levels of significance. The fitness of the model can be explained by F-ratio in Table 3. The F-ratio in the model is I367.597, which is very significant at p < 0.05. This implies that there is significant evidence to extrapolate that perceived quality is linearly related to purchase intention. The study concludes that, the regression model is useful to the extent that the predictor variables significantly predict the behaviour of the dependent variable investigated. The implication is that at least one of the independent variables has none zero coefficient. This proposes that the model is measured to be fit and that perceived quality has substantial influence on purchase intention.

Multi-Collinearity Test

Table 4: Multi-Collinearity Test of Perceived Quality and Purchase Intention (n=350).

Model Dimension	Condition Index	Eigen value B	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient			Collinearity statistics	
			Std error	Beta	T	Sig	Tolerance		VIF
Constant	.087	29.476	2.865	0.39	-			-	-
.						2.375	0.000		
PT	037	11.464	.900	.044	.857	16893	0.000	1.000	1.000
PS	042	9.657	1.307	.075	.667	16.640	0.000	1.000 .	1.000
DA	028	8.411	0.640	.067	.776	7.393	0.000	1.000	1.000

Source: SPSS Window Output, Version 22.0 (2023)

Table 4 indicates that product taste is statistically significant and account for purchase intention of trado-medical firms products in River State. It has a t-statistics value of 16.893. Besides, the result indicates that product safety has a statistical significant influence on purchase intention of trado-medical firms products

in River State. It has a t-statistics of 16.640. Further, the result indicates that dosage accuracy has a statistically significant influence on purchase intention of trado-medical firms in River State. It has a t-statistics of 7.393.

More sophisticated correlations in data than just the pairwise correlations allow the use of tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF) associated with Xh. The tolerance explains the statistics used to disclose the degree to which the independent variables have linear (straight line) relationships with one another. Tolerance values heading towards zero and values of VIF exceeding 10 are cardinal signs of multi-collinearity. This decision rule enables the study to conclude that there is no threat of multi-collinearity amongst the dimensions of the independent variables.

This study focused on investigating the influence of perceived quality on purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State. The reason being that trado-medical firms in Rivers State have been witnessing a downturn in purchase intention. To guide the study, a conceptual framework was developed showing the predictor and criterion variables with their dimensions and measures. In addition, specific objectives of the study were stated as well as research questions. Based on the research objectives and questions, null hypotheses were formulated. The intention is to highlight initiatives that can successfully drive trado-medical firms in Rivers State in order to achieve ultimately sustainable purchase intention.

The research concern seeks to determine the extent to which the combined components of perceived quality influence purchase intention. Our empirical results suggest that the combined components of perceived quality play a positive role in influencing purchase intention. This is evidenced by the results in Table 2, 3 and 4, which indicates that the combined components of perceived quality interaction with purchase intention are highly significant. The associated *p*-value of the t-statistic corresponding to (.857, .667 and .776) and a P-value of 0.0000 which is very much lower higher than 0.05. This implies that there is positive and significant effect of the combined components of perceived quality on the purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State. This finding supports the findings of Olayinka *et al.* (2017) who found that, Trado-modern medicine, contributes to development of health care, job creation, economic activities, growth and development, but is inconsistent with the results obtained by Leonika (2017) that perceived value has no significant influence on consumer purchase intention Feng and Yu (2016) who found an insignificant effect of consumer animosity on product judgement and purchase intention.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of perceived quality on purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State. The study posit that the components of perceived quality investigated by this study were optimistically connected with purchase intention, presenting a good judgment to assert that the variables of perceived quality (product taste, product safety and dosage accuracy) have the latent to activate purchase intention, and their absence spells economic .downturn for trado-medical firms in the long run, thus hampering purchase intention. The study therefore, concludes that, perceived quality significantly influences purchase intention of trado-medical firms in Rivers State, and recommends that, in order to boost perceived quality, the management of trado-medical firms should design perceived quality

furthering programs in terms of product taste, product safety and dosage accuracy to enhance affirmative purchase intentions for their organizations.

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