

Effect of “Herbal Cosmetic” “Product Quality Perception” on “Purchase Intention”: Mediating Role of “Consumer Trust”

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Abstract: The need to understand the factors affecting consumers' “purchase intentions” has risen due to the increasing demand for “cosmetic products” that are herbal. This study explores how Perception of Quality of a “Herbal Cosmetic Product” mediate the relation among “Perception of Quality” and “Purchase Intention with Consumer Trust” as a “mediating variable”. The study was based on the “Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)” which describes the link among consumer beliefs and evaluations and behaviour intentions. A “quantitative research method” was used and a standardised questionnaire were used to collect data from 250 consumers who had knowledge about herbal cosmetics product. The data has been analyzed by using “Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)” Software, SmartPLS 4. The results highlighted that “Product Quality Perception” had a significant positive impact on “Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention”. “Consumer Trust” was also positively related to “Purchase Intention”. In addition, the “mediation analysis” revealed that “Consumer Trust” partially mediated the link between “Product Quality Perception” and “Purchase Intention”. Based on these findings, consumers tend to buy herbal cosmetics products if they believe its products are high quality and they have confidence in claims and performance. The research adds to the body of literature regarding consumer behavior and offers practical guidance to herbal cosmetic companies that want to boost consumers' confidence and willingness to buy using product quality.

Keywords: Herbal Cosmetics, Product Quality Perception, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behaviour, Green Marketing, Sustainable Consumption, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), PLS-SEM, SmartPLS

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the last decade, there has been a major change in the demand of the cosmetics sectors with the increasing preference for “herbal and natural cosmetic products”. Beauty and personal care products are becoming popular among consumers for their supposedly safer, healthier and environmental friendly qualities (Gamage et al., 2022). This is the key reason for the world's fast expanding herbal beauty industry. According to recent market reports, “the global herbal beauty products market was worth around USD 90 billion in 2024, and forecasted to surpass USD 244 billion by 2032 with CAGR exceeding 13%.” The Asia-Pacific is currently the largest market share contributor, with the consumers showing acceptance to herbal and plant-based cosmetic products (Data bridge, 2024).

The growing awareness about synthetic chemicals that are often used in cosmetics manufactured using traditional methods is one of the main reasons for this expansion. Various synthetic ingredients like parabens, sulphates, phthalates and other ingredients have been linked to health and environmental issues and have caused concern for consumers. Natural cosmetics have been promoted because the harmful health and environmental effects of long-term use of some synthetic cosmetic ingredients have been highlighted (Alnuqaydan, 2024). In addition, over 40% of global consumers are now seeking out natural ingredients when buying beauty and personal care products, pointing to a significant shift towards cleaner and greener consumption patterns (CAS, 2024).



With the growing consumer awareness about health, wellness and sustainability, the quality of the products plays important role that affects the success of “herbal cosmetic products. Product” Quality is judged by consumers according to several parameters such as reliability, effectiveness, durability, safety, and performance (Couceiro et al., 2025). Consumers of herbals are looking for good performance in other products that include natural ingredients, as well as

a performance at the same or higher level than the conventional product. Therefore, “consumers' perceptions” of “product quality” become a key factor in determining their purchase intention.

But customer willingness to buy herbal cosmetics may not be enough because of the perceived product quality. Product claims are often uncertain when it comes to consumers' trust, credibility, and effectiveness. Hence, consumer confidence plays a pivotal part in their "decision making". Building trust decreases “perceived risk” and increases confidence in a product. Srivastava et al. (2022), had proposed that consumers who perceive the product as being of high quality will also have a greater trust in the product, thereby increasing their intention to purchase the product. As such, trust can be seen as a significant linkage between product evaluations and purchasing behaviour.

Although the herbal cosmetics market is rapidly expanding, empirical studies have investigated the relation between the “quality perception of herbal cosmetic products” and their intended purchase via consumer trust, especially in developing markets where consumer awareness and buying habits are still evolving. It is vital in the “decision-making process” and for herbal cosmetic companies to create an effective marketing strategy to improve the product quality perception, “consumer trust”, and in turn, consumers' intent to buy the products.

1.2 Research Objectives

“To examine the effect of Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception on Consumer Trust.”

“To investigate the effect of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention toward herbal cosmetic products.”

“To determine the effect of Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception on Purchase Intention.”

“To examine the mediating role of Consumer Trust in the relationship between Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention.”

1.3 Research Questions

Does Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception significantly influence “Consumer Trust?”

Does “Consumer Trust” significantly influence “Purchase Intention” toward herbal cosmetic products?

Does Herbal Cosmetic “Product Quality Perception” significantly influence “Purchase Intention”?

Does Consumer Trust mediate the relationship between “Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception” and “Purchase Intention”?

2. Literature Review and Framework

2.1 Herbal Cosmetics: Concept and Market Overview

“Herbal cosmetics” are products that contain plant-based ingredients, herbal extracts, and naturally derived substances that are used to enhance the appearance and personal care without excessive use of synthetic chemicals. Herbal cosmetics are cosmetics that use biologically active ingredients derived from a plant source and are one of the fastest growing areas of the personal care sector as they are thought to be safe and effective (Dongare et al., 2021). Laxmi (2015) also stated that herbal cosmetics are appreciated due to their natural make-up, low toxicity and minor side effects as compared to the conventional cosmetic products.

“Herbal cosmetics” are gaining popularity in the market, with significant growth. According to recent figures from CMI (2024), “the global herbal beauty products market was valued at more than USD 100 billion”, and is

expected to rise further because of the growing demand for “organic personal care products” among consumers. Gamage et al. (2022) reported that due to

the rapid rise in awareness of their health risks and environmental consciousness, plant-based cosmetic products have gained popularity across the globe.

Despite the general notion that herbal cosmetics are safer and more eco-friendly, however, some studies suggest that natural ingredients do not necessarily mean high quality and efficacy in a cosmetic product. To ensure consumer confidence and continued market growth, the importance of scientifically proven formulations and quality standards is highlighted.

2.2 Product Quality Perception

2.2.1 Concept of Product Quality Perception

Product quality perception is the “consumer's assessment” of the “excellence”, “superiority” and expectation-satisfying of a product. Aakko and Niinimäki (2021) explained that the perceived quality is not a more objective product property; it is more of an interpretation and assessment of the product attribute by the consumer. In a similar fashion, Vera, (2015) stated that the notion of quality is subjective because consumers generally lack sufficient information and use a number of cues to make judgements about quality.

There is a difference between “objective and perceived quality”. “Objective quality” is the characteristics of the product which can be measured and verified, while perceived quality is the personal assessment based on experiences, beliefs and expectations of the consumers. According to Styliadis, Wickman and Söderberg (2019), perceived quality is influenced by both sensory evaluations and cognitive interpretations, making it a crucial determinant of consumer behaviour.

2.2.2 Product Quality Perception in Herbal Cosmetics

Consumers have different perspectives on the quality of herbal cosmetics, ranging from safety, reliability, and effectiveness, to natural ingredients and performance. Herbal cosmetics are often perceived as having minimal health risks and side effects compared to conventional cosmetics (Palanivelu et al., 2022). Moreover, Indian customers tend to take authenticity,

effectiveness, and safety standards of ingredients as critical parameters to define the quality of cosmetics (Madhavedi et al., 2025).

However, Gamage et al., (2022) pointed out that the natural ingredients are not sufficient to guarantee perceived quality. Herbal cosmetics are expected to provide consumers tangible performance results similar to traditional cosmetics. As such, the perception of reliability and effectiveness continues to be key issues when assessing “product quality”.

2.3 Consumer Trust

2.3.1 Concept of Consumer Trust

“Trust” among consumers and marketers is a well-known prerequisite for marketing relationships and consumer choice. Handoyo (2024) defines trust as the ability of consumers to believe in the reliability, integrity and credibility of a product, brand or organization. Trust is especially crucial in uncertain situations when the user does not know what to expect from a product. Likewise, Wang et al. (2014) pointed out that consumer trust is an important element to sustain and improve exchange relationships, as it can boost consumer buying behaviour.

According to the literature of consumer behaviour, trust is a psychological condition that allows consumers to embrace vulnerability due to positive expectations about a product or a brand. But, Milne and Boza (2011) have also indicated that trust has multiple dimensions and can be affected by variables like competence, honesty, transparency

and consistency. As such, marketers should continue to foster consumer trust as a key goal for improving customer satisfaction and willingness to buy, if they aim to boost customer loyalty.

2.3.2 Trust in Herbal Cosmetic Products

In the “herbal cosmetics industry”, “consumers” often are not able to make first-hand evaluations of the claims made for natural ingredients, safety and efficacy before purchasing a product, making trust essential. Even though consumers are more likely to trust marketers when it comes to health benefits, ingredient authenticity, and sustainability, they are doing so based

on claims, according to a study by Kumar et al. (2021) on natural personal care products. Therefore, the trust in product claims is one important factor that affects consumers' willingness to purchase herbal cosmetic products.

Scott (2024), also suggested that trust in ingredients is significant in determining perceptions of herbal products. “Consumers” tend to believe in products that offer clear ingredient listings and scientific evidence for the efficacy claims. But consumer trust could be undermined with problems of false labelling, greenwashing and claims for natural products. Therefore, brand credibility is a key component in developing the trust. “Consumers” are more “likely to trust” brands that produce consistently good products and offer them reliable information, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases.

2.4 Purchase Intention

2.4.1 “Concept of Purchase Intention”

A person's deliberate plan or desire to buy a particular good or service in the future is known as "purchase intention." It has been demonstrated to be among the best indicators of actual "purchasing behavior.”. Based on the consumer behaviour study conducted by Duong et al. (2024), the purchase intention can be defined as the probability that a consumer will make a purchase when considering their evaluation, attitudes, and beliefs about a product. “Purchase intention” has been consistently recognized as a vital factor in market demand and “consumer acceptance”.

Importance of purchase intention is its power to account for the relation between attitude and perception and behavioural outcomes. “Purchase intention” serves as a good indicator of consumers' future buying behaviour and decision making processes, even though purchase behaviour might be affected by other external constraints. Therefore, purchase intention is often taken as a measure of the success of the product and preference of the consumer (Tran, 2020).

2.4.2 Purchase Intention in Herbal Cosmetics

The “intention to buy” is influenced by several factors in the context of herbal cosmetics: the product’s “perceived quality”, the fact that the product is made of “natural ingredients”, environmental awareness, trust, product safety, and brand reputation. Kumar et al., (2021) stated that consumers are willing to buy natural personal care products if they think they will help them and are safe and environmentally friendly. If appropriate trust is not built, however, concerns about product authenticity and effectiveness can cause a decrease in purchase intention.

Marketers and businesses need to grasp the concept of purchase intention as it helps them create strategies that meet the expectations of “consumers”. According to Liu and Wang (2023), companies that can improve the consumer's perception of the product quality and develop consumer confidence are more likely to improve the intention to purchase and gain sustainable competitive advantages in the expanding herbal cosmetics market.

2.5 Hypotheses Development

Some research indicates that “product quality perception” is one of the crucial driver that influence trust. Trust in a product and its brand is enhanced by consumers' perception of its reliability, effectiveness, and safety (Sung et al., 2023). The literature on natural and green products has consistently suggested that “perceived quality” is positively related to trust, with high quality reducing uncertainty and increasing consumer's confidence in product claims.

“Consumer trust” is also an important “predictor of purchase intention”. Previous literature found that trust lessens perceived risk and enhances consumers' purchasing intentions for a product. While “consumers” are more inclined to select from brands they trust and feel are credible.

Moreover, the “perceived product quality” directly affects “purchase intention”. This is because, in general, a “consumer” is more intend to buy a product if he/she thinks that the

product is of high quality. In the cosmetic industry, “product quality” is considered to be one of the key factors that would affect the customers' choices and purchases.

Furthermore, research has shown that “trust” is a mediator in-between “perceptions” and “behavioral intentions”. If consumers have a high quality perception of herbal cosmetic products, they tend to develop trust then, intention to purchase tends to increase as a result of this trust (Salmuni et al., 2023).

“Ha1: Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception positively influences Consumer Trust.”

“Ha2: Consumer Trust positively influences Purchase Intention toward herbal cosmetic products.”

“Ha3: Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception positively influences Purchase Intention toward herbal cosmetic products.”

“Ha4: Consumer Trust mediates the relationship between Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention.”

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical model used in this study is “Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)”, which assumes that a person's intentions to behave a certain way depend on their beliefs and evaluations of a specific product or behavior. “TPB” suggests that beliefs precede attitudes and attitudes in turn drive behavioural intentions (Rozenkowska, 2023). Consumers form perceptions regarding product quality when using herbal cosmetics, based on safety, effectiveness, reliability and the use of natural ingredients. These beliefs are relevant to their overall evaluation of the product and to the formation of “Consumer Trust”.

Trust can be considered an attitude reaction which can diminish uncertainty and increase confidence in a product's performance. Thus, if the consumers think that the herbal cosmetics are of high quality, they trust more on the same. This trust is then reinforced to improve their Purchase Intention. In addition,” Product Quality Perception” can also directly affect “Purchase

Intention” as customers tend to prefer those products that they believe are reliable and useful. In a similar manner, the framework presented in this study suggests that in addition to directly affecting purchase intentions, the quality beliefs of the innovation also mediate the relationship between the innovation and purchase intentions through “Consumer Trust” as proposed in TPB. Following TPB, the framework proposed in this study suggests that, in addition to its direct effect on purchase intentions, the quality beliefs of the innovation also mediate between the innovation and “purchase intentions through Consumer Trust” (Liu and Wang, 2023).

As per the proposed framework, it can be observed that the “product quality perception” directly affects the “consumer trust and purchase intention”. “Consumer Trust” also has a direct effect on “Purchase Intention” and acts as a “mediator” between “Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention”.

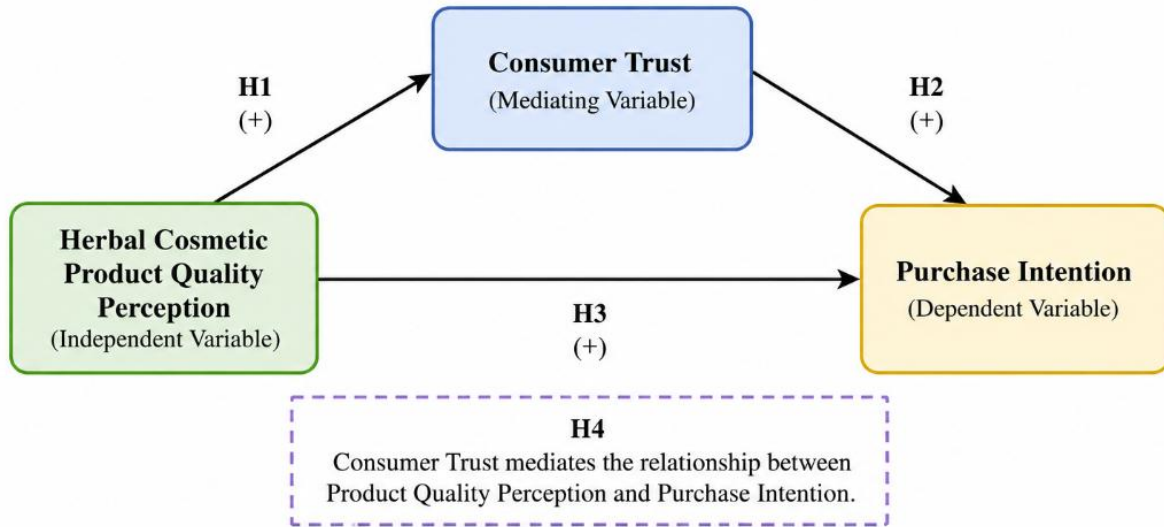


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

“Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)” gives an understanding of “consumer purchase intentions”. The theory posits that a person's intentions to engage in a behaviour are affected by their attitudes, subjective norms, and “perceived level of behavioural control”. TPB states that beliefs first influence attitudes towards a product (Rozenkowska, 2023). Positive attitudes enable the formation of positive purchase intentions.

When it comes to herbal cosmetics, consumers form their perception of the product's quality, safety, efficacy, and use of natural ingredients. These beliefs affect their assessment of the product and help to build consumer trust. Trust may be considered as an attitudinal response which can be understood as a reduction of uncertainty and increase of confidence on the performance of the product. The previous research conducted by Liu and Wang (2023) agreed that the TPB is applicable to understand the role of perceptions and trust on purchase intention in different consumption contexts. Based on the aforementioned reason, TPB is the theory that is suitable for the study on the “influence of the quality perception” of herbal cosmetic products on “purchase intention” by mediation of consumer trust.

3. Methodology

This chapter introduces the “methodology” used to explore the influence of “Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception on Purchase Intention”, including the “mediation” of “Consumer Trust”. The methodology was planned to fulfil the aims of the research and to verify the hypotheses on a systematic and objective manner.

The study used “positivist research philosophy” which is based on the fact that phenomena can be observed and measured objectively with scientific approaches. This philosophy was deemed as proper since the study concerned itself with the analysis of relationship between predefined variables and testing of the hypotheses formulated based on the existing theories and literature (Ali 2024). A deductive research approach, consistent with the positivist paradigm, was used. The deductive method started with existing theories and empirical studies, then the hypothesis is formed and tested using data that have been collected (Kumar, 2024).

A quantitative research methodology was used, because it is useful for gathering and analyzing numerical data, and where relationships among variables can be statistically tested. Studies that involve consumer attitudes, perceptions and behavioural intentions are suitable for quantitative methods (Ghanad, 2023). It was a “cross-sectional research design” as the data was collected

from the respondents. For this reason, this design was chosen, as it offers an efficient way of capturing consumers' perceptions and behavioural intentions within a certain time period (Hunziker and Blankenagel, 2024).

Target population consisted of consumers with knowledge and or experience of herbal cosmetic products. To enable them to give informed feedback regarding product quality, trust and purchase intention, these consumers were deemed as suitable participants as they had relevant knowledge and experience of herbal cosmetic products. Due to constraints relating to time and accessibility, “convenience sampling” was employed. “Convenience sampling” involves the selecting individuals that agree to participate in the study. 250 respondents filled out the survey. The “sample size” was found suitable for the application of “Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)” that is widely used in small to moderate sample size studies.

A “structured questionnaire” was employed in the process of “primary data collection”. The questionnaire developed by the researchers based on measurement scales which have already been validated in literature so that the questionnaire is “reliable and valid”. The instrument consisted of demographic questions and measurement items relating to the study constructs. Five items adopted from Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) were used to measure Product Quality Perception. Consumer Trust was measured by five items adapted from Chen (2010) and Purchase Intention was measured by three items adapted from Maichum, Parichatnon and Peng (2016). The five statements were rated upon a “5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)”.

The gathered data were “analyzed” by “SmartPLS 4 software”. “The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)” was chosen since it is perfect for predictive research and for researching complex relationships between several constructs. The analysis was done in 2 stages. The first stage was to verify the “measurement model” to check the

“reliability and validity” of the “constructs”. Three measures of “reliability” “(outer loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability)” were used to assess the reliability. “Average Variance Extracted (AVE)” was used to analyze convergent validity and the “Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)” were used to analyze “discriminant validity”.

The second phase was the evaluation of the “structural model”. This involved the analysis of the “coefficient of determination (R²), path coefficients” and hypothesis testing by the bootstrapping procedure. Furthermore, “mediation analysis” was performed to investigate the mediating role of “Consumer Trust between the Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention”. The direct and indirect relationships among constructs were assessed using these analytical procedures, along with the degree to which the proposed conceptual framework was supported.

Throughout the entire research procedure, ethical concerns were addressed. The study was voluntary, and participants were informed of its objectives prior to filling out the "questionnaire." Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured to safeguard the respondents' right to privacy and any collected data was only used for academic research. There was no disclosure of personally identifiable information and respondents could opt-out at any time. Therefore, a systematic and reliable methodology formed the base of investigation of the study.

4. Results

4.1 Assessment of the Measurement Model

The “measurement model” was assessed to determine the “reliability and validity” of the “constructs” used in the study. The indicators were evaluated with regard to reliability, “internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity.”

4.1.1 “Indicator Reliability”

“Indicator reliability” was checked using “Outer loadings”. Hair, Howard and Nitzl (2019) suggest that outer loading values should be higher than 0.70 for the indicators to be representative of their constructs. Table 4.1 shows all indicator loadings were above 0.80, which is the recommended level.

The loadings were between 0.805 and 0.851 for Product Quality Perception (PP). Loadings for Consumer Trust were between 0.864 and 0.899 for the indicators and 0.841 to 0.892 for Purchase Intention (Table 4.1). All scores

were above 0.70, indicating that the indicators showed satisfactory reliability and were used for further analysis. These findings suggest that the measurement was successful in capturing the constructs that it was designed to capture.

Table 4.1: “Indicator Reliability (Outer Loadings)”

“Construct”	“Item”	“Outer Loading”
Product Quality Perception	PP1	0.851
Product Quality Perception	PP2	0.830
Product Quality Perception	PP3	0.842
Product Quality Perception	PP4	0.805
Product Quality Perception	PP5	0.824
Consumer Trust	Trust1	0.864
Consumer Trust	Trust2	0.896
Consumer Trust	Trust3	0.899
Consumer Trust	Trust4	0.882
Consumer Trust	Trust5	0.867
“Purchase Intention”	PI1	0.892
“Purchase Intention”	PI2	0.841
“Purchase Intention”	PI3	0.879

4.1.2 “Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity”

“Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR)” were employed to test for “internal consistency reliability”. Values more than 0.70 are usually satisfactory for both measures. It can be seen from the results presented in Table 4.2 that all “constructs” are above the threshold score.

Product Quality Perception had a “Cronbach's Alpha” of 0.888 and a “Composite Reliability” value of 0.918. Consumer Trust had the highest “Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability” values, at 0.926 and 0.944, respectively. The purchase intention also had good reliability scores of 0.841 and 0.904.

The results displayed that all “constructs” have high “internal consistency reliability”, which means that the items in the measurement measure the same concept. The “Average Variance Extracted (AVE)” was used to examine the “convergent validity”. Based on the established rule, the AVE values need to be greater than 0.50, which means that more than half of the variance of the indicators of a construct is explained (Cheung et al., 2023).

Product Quality Perception, Consumer Trust, and “Purchase Intention” respectively had an AVE value of 0.691, 0.771, and 0.759 as seen in Table 4.2. The minimum value was 0.50 and all values were greater. The results showed good convergent validity, meaning that the indicators of each construct have a large amount of common variance, and represent well their latent variables.

Table 4.2: Internal Consistency and “Convergent Reliability”

“Construct”	“Cronbach's Alpha”	“Composite Reliability”	“AVE”
Product Quality Perception	0.888	0.918	0.691
Consumer Trust	0.926	0.944	0.771
Purchase Intention	0.841	0.904	0.759

4.1.3 “Discriminant Validity”

“Discriminant validity” was checked using the “Fornell-Larcker criterion” and the “Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)”. The HTMT ratio was explored for the purpose of “further evidence of discriminant validity”. The HTMT values were 0.826 for PI–PP, 0.814 for PI–Trust, and 0.832 for PP–Trust. All other values were lower than the recommended 0.85 value, and so discriminant validity was further confirmed (table 4.3).

Table 4.3: “Discriminant Validity (HTMT)”

Relationship	HTMT Value
PI – PP	0.826
PI – Trust	0.814
PP – Trust	0.832

4.2 Assessment of the “Structural Model”

After the establishment of “reliability and validity”, the “structural model” was tested to see the relationships between “Product Quality Perception”, “Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention”. The evaluation of mediation effects, “path coefficients”, model fit indices, and “coefficient of determination (R^2)” was performed in the assessment.

4.2.1 Assessment of Collinearity in the Structural Model

Since the data for all constructs were collected from the same respondents using a single questionnaire, the possibility of “common method bias (CMB)” was assessed. The Full “Collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)” approach was applied based on the recommendation of Kock (2015) by the use of “SmartPLS 4 software”. The approach is that VIF values below 3.3 suggest that common method bias is not likely to be a problem.

The VIF values were between 1.000 and 2.829 as presented in Table 4.4. “Product Quality Perception-Consumer Trust” showed a “VIF value” of 1.000, and “Consumer Trust-Purchase Intention” showed a VIF value of 2.829. The values for all of these were not greater than the recommended value of 3.3. Hence, the results indicate that common method bias was not a

Table 4.4: VIF Assessment

Relationship	VIF Value
Product Quality Perception → Consumer Trust	1.000
Product Quality Perception → Purchase Intention	2.829
Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	2.829

serious problem in this study. Furthermore, the results also showed that there was no evidence of multicollinearity among the predictor constructs, which means that the structural model is valid for further hypothesis testing.

4.2.2 “Coefficient of Determination (R^2)”

In order to evaluate the prediction accuracy of the “structural model”, the “coefficient of determination (R^2)” was taken as the index. “Consumer Trust” had an R^2 of 0.646, meaning that the Product Quality Perception accounted for the 64.6% of the variance in Consumer Trust (as shown in Table 4.5). In the same manner, “Purchase Intention” had an R^2 of 0.613 which indicated that the variance in “Purchase Intention” could be explained by “Product Quality Perception and Consumer Trust” together by 61.3% (Table 4.5).

Hair et al., (2021) stated that the value of R^2 of more than 0.50 means that there is moderate explanatory power. As a consequence, the model exhibits moderate to high predictive ability in predicting the variations in “Consumer Trust and in Purchase Intention.”

Table 4.5: R-square

“Endogenous Construct”	“R ² ”	“Adjusted R ² ”
Consumer Trust	0.646	0.643
Purchase Intention	0.613	0.605

4.2.3 “Path Coefficients” and “Hypothesis Testing”

“Path coefficients”, statistics (t) and p values were computed through bootstrapping to determine the “significance of the proposed relationships”. The results are shown in Table 4.6.

The result showed that the relationship of “Product Quality Perception with Consumer Trust” was “positive and significant” ($\beta = 0.804$, $t = 21.202$, $p < 0.001$). It suggests that the higher consumers perceived the product quality, the higher their trust in herbal cosmetics. So, Ha1 was thus supported. The strength of the coefficient also indicates that the “quality of the product perceived by the consumer is a good predictor of Consumer Trust”.

For the second “relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention”, the Beta value was 0.522 with $t = 5.428$ and $p < 0.001$, which means that the relationship is “positive and significant”. This discovery shows that consumers who believe that herbal cosmetic products are trustworthy, are more inclined to purchase them. As a result Ha2 received support.

Likewise, Product Quality Perception showed “significant positive” impact on “Purchase Intention” ($\beta = 0.300$, $t = 3.166$, $p = 0.002$). The findings indicate that if “consumers” believe that herbal cosmetic products are reliable, safe and effective, they will be more inclined to form purchase intentions. Thus, Ha3 was supported.

In general, all direct relationships suggested in the conceptual framework were statistically significant and positive.

Table 4.6: “Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing”

“Hypothesis”	“Path”	“ β ”	“t-value”	“p-value”	“Decision”
H1	Product Quality Perception → Consumer Trust	0.804	21.202	0.000	Supported
H2	Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	0.522	5.428	0.000	Supported
H3	Product Quality Perception → Purchase Intention	0.300	3.166	0.002	Supported

4.2.4 Mediation Analysis

Specific indirect effects were analyzed to investigate the role of “Consumer Trust”. The indirect effect of Product Quality “Perception on Purchase Intention” through “Consumer Trust” was found to be “significant” ($\beta = 0.419$, $t = 5.141$, $p < 0.001$) as shown in Table 4.7.

The result shows that “Product Quality Perception” has a “positive effect” on “Consumer Trust” which then has a “positive effect” on “Purchase Intention”. The direct effect of Product Quality Perception on “Purchase

Intention” still had significant results ($\beta = 0.300$, $p = 0.002$) after the mediator was added, so the mediation effect can be called partial mediation. Thus, Ha4 was validated.

Table 4.7: “Mediation Analysis”

“Hypothesis”	“Indirect Path”	“ β ”	“t-value”	“p-value”	“Decision”
H4	Product Quality Perception → Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	0.419	5.141	0.000	Supported

4.2.5 “Model Fit Assessment”

The “Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)” and the “Normed Fit Index (NFI)” were used to assess model fit. The “SRMR” was 0.056, which was lower than the recommended value of 0.08, suggesting a good “model fit”. “NFI” value was 0.883, near to the acceptable value of 0.90 so it was acceptable. The model as a whole was found to have an acceptable fit to the observations (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: “Model Fit Assessment”

“Model Fit Index”	“Value”	“Recommended Value”	“Assessment”
SRMR	0.056	< 0.08	Good Fit
NFI	0.883	> 0.90 (preferred)	Acceptable Fit
d_ ULS	0.284	Descriptive	Reported
d_ G	0.210	Descriptive	Reported
Chi-Square	117.401	Lower values preferred	Reported

4.2.6 Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) was used to evaluate the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous constructs in the structural model. The levels of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered small, medium, and large effects, respectively, according to Cohen (1988). The “Consumer Trust” was the variable most strongly affected by “Product Quality Perception” ($f^2 = 1.829$), as presented in Table 4.9, indicating that the perception of the consumers about the quality, safety, reliability and effectiveness of the herbal cosmetic products has a large influence on the development of trust. Additionally, the consumer trust had a medium effect on the purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.249$), indicating that this is a significant factor in creating willingness to buy herbal cosmetic products. “Product Quality Perception”, on the other hand, had a small direct effect on “Purchase Intention” ($f^2 = 0.082$). The results show that perceived product quality positively influences purchase intention, with the influence of perceived product quality being partially mediated by Consumer Trust, as suggested in the conceptual framework (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Effect Size (f^2)

Relationship	f^2 Value	Effect Size
Product Quality Perception → Consumer Trust	1.829	Large

Product Quality Perception → Purchase Intention	0.082	Small
Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	0.249	Medium

5. Discussions

This study sought to assess the effect of “Perceived Product Quality” on “Consumer Trust” towards herbal cosmetic products. The results suggested that there was a significant positive

correlation between “Perceived Product Quality and Consumer Trust” ($\beta = 0.804$, $p < 0.001$), which means higher the “consumers' perception” of the product quality of herbal cosmetic products, the more they trust the products.

The results align with Khan et al. (2022) who reported that green “product characteristics” and perceived quality positively influence consumer trust by improving their confidence on product performance and environmental information. Likewise, Khan et al. (2022) found that green perceived quality positively affects green trust, and that consumers' evaluation of credibility depends on their quality perceptions. Moreover, Hashish et al. (2022) concluded that the perception of quality is a significant factor in building consumer trust in the brand and influencing their actions.

Additionally, the results are aligned with the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which proposes that positive product perceptions generate positive consumer beliefs about product reliability and effectiveness, leading to increased consumer trust (Raquel et al., 2023). Hence, the “quality of a product” is perceived as is a key factor in establishing consumer trust in herbal cosmetic products.

The second objective of this study was to examine the impact of Consumer Trust on “Purchase Intention” for “herbal cosmetic products”. The results showed that there is a significant “positive correlation between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention” ($\beta = 0.522$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the consumers who believe in the claims, ingredients and credibility of herbal cosmetic products are more likely to buy.

Wang, Zaman and Alvi (2022) reported that “Trust” is a significant influence on “Purchase Intention” since people tend to buy products that are credible and responsible for the environment. This finding is consistent with Wang, Zaman and Alvi (2022) who reported that “Green Trust” is a significant influence on “Green Purchase Intention” since people tend to purchase products they perceive as credible and responsible for the environment. Similarly,

Amalia et al. (2025) found that trust in green cosmetics is one of the most important factors influencing the consumers' intention to buy the green cosmetic products in India.

Moreover, Tan et al. (2022) found that trust plays a crucial role in purchase intention as it helps to alleviate perceived risk and boost consumer confidence in sustainable products. These results align with the “Theory of Planned Behavior”, which suggests that positive beliefs and attitudes positively impact on behavioural intentions. Hence, according to the present study, Consumer Trust is one of the important factors that influence the Purchase Intention of the herbal cosmetic products as confirmed (Maichum, Parichatnon and Peng, 2016).

The third objective of this study was to find the impact of “Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception on Purchase Intention”. The results showed that there was a “significant positive correlation” between “Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention” ($\beta = 0.300$, $p = 0.002$). This suggests that the safe, effective, reliable and higher performance perceptions of consumers towards herbal cosmetic products make them more willing to buy them.

This is in line with the findings of Ansu-Mensah (2021) which indicated that green perceived quality significantly affects consumers' “green purchase intentions”. Likewise, Dlamini and Mahowa (2024) noted that the perceived quality positively influences consumers' intention to buy organic cosmetic products by making them more confident about the safety and efficacy of the products. In addition, Limbu and Ahamed (2023) found that perceived product quality was one of the factors that influenced the green cosmetics purchasing intention.

The finding is also supported by the “Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)” which indicates that “positive attitudes” towards product attributes lead to more positive behavioural intentions. Thus, the result of the present study shows that “Product Quality Perception” is a significant factor in affecting Purchase Intention to herbal cosmetic product.

The fourth objective investigated the “mediating effect” of “Consumer Trust” on the relationship between “Herbal Cosmetic Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention”.

The results showed the indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.419$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that “Product Quality Perception” has an indirect effect on “Purchase Intention” via Consumer Trust.

The results align with Khan et al. 2022 who concluded that green trust is one of the significant mechanisms that affects “consumers' behavioural intentions” when it comes to green product attributes. Likewise, Tan et al. (2022) found that trust plays a mediating role between the green marketing factors and purchase intention, indicating that trust is a bridge that converts positive product evaluations into positive purchasing decisions. Moreover, Wang, Zaman and Alvi (2022) found that green trust positively influences the consumer's perception of green products and consequently their purchase intention.

It also helps to explain the findings of “TPB”, which indicates that product evaluations affect beliefs and attitudes which influence behavioural intentions. Hence, “Consumer Trust” can be considered as a critical and essential link between the “Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention”.

6. Implications

6.1 “Theoretical Implication”

This study contributes to the existing body of research on consumer behavior by extending the use of the “Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).” Some studies have examined the combined effects of “Product Quality Perception, Consumer Trust, and Purchase Intention” in the herbal cosmetics business, despite the fact that a number of earlier studies have examined the elements influencing “purchase intention.” The results show that “Product Quality Perception” has a “positive effect” on Consumer Trust, and a significant positive effect on “Purchase Intention”, which is partially “mediated” by “Consumer Trust”. The findings confirm the hypothesis of TPB, which posits that consumer beliefs about product attributes have an effect on behavioural intentions via attitudinal pathways. The study also corroborates past research in which trust

was found to be an explanatory mechanism in green consumption behaviour. “Perceived quality and perceived trust” were identified as the crucial drivers of “purchase intention” in recent reviews of “green cosmetics research”, which, however, point to the need for empirical research that will shed light on the interdependencies of these factors. Hence, this study adds to the knowledge on the theory of “consumer decision-making” in the herbal cosmetics market.

6.2 Practical Implications

The results have some “practical implications” for the herbal cosmetic manufacturers, marketing professionals and brand managers. Product quality attributes that were identified as significant contributors to Product Quality Perception and were found to greatly influence “Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention” should be prioritized by the companies, including safety, effectiveness, reliability and using genuine natural ingredients. Enhanced trust of consumers in companies should also be achieved by making more transparent information on product composition, certifications, and environmental benefits available. Previous studies found that safety, sustainability and credibility of environmental claims are more and more important criteria for evaluating cosmetic products. Moreover, a series of studies on green cosmetics has demonstrated that consumers' trust in the product plays a significant role in their willingness to buy “green products”. Hence, marketers should target the establishment of trustworthy images of their brands based on consistent products, credible communication, and sustainable business practices. In the dynamic and rapidly expanding green cosmetics market, herbal cosmetic companies can gain competitive advantages by boosting consumers' quality perceptions and building trust.

7. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Scope

This study involved the effect of HCPQP on Purchasing Intention, having “Consumer Trust” as a “mediating variable”. Moreover, the results showed that “Product Quality Perception” has a “significant and positive effect” on “Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention”. It was also

determined that “Consumer Trust” had a strong positive influence on “Purchase Intention”. Moreover, the “mediation analysis” showed that the relation between “Product Quality Perception and Purchase Intention” was partially mediated by “Consumer Trust”. The results indicated that consumers are more inclined to buy herbal “cosmetic products” if the quality is perceived high and they trust in the claims, ingredients and performance of these products.

The research has some limitations. Firstly, the sample size may limit the Wider applicability of the findings. Moreover, a “cross-sectional design” means that causal inferences are limited. Thirdly, the study only examined Product Quality Perception and Consumer Trust but did not look at other factors affecting purchase intention.

These restrictions may be overcome in future studies by larger and broader samples in other geographic areas. Longitudinal studies may provide more information regarding the changing perceptions and behaviors of consumers over time. In addition, other factors such as brand image, environment, product knowledge, “perceived value” and “consumer attitudes” can be added in the future to better understand the intention of buying cosmetic products from herbs. This research would also provide new insights into the current body of literature on “Consumption Behaviour and Sustainable Consumption.”

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