

FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIC TEA PURCHASE INTENTION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

P. K. U. Perera

*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

Corresponding author (email: udarakasun864@gmail.com)

INTRODUCTION

Changing consumers' food consumption patterns seems to be a significant threat to living a healthy life. Conventional agriculture, chemicals, and fertilizers ruin the environment and human beings' lifestyles. Therefore, organic agriculture started booming in many countries by taking advantage of capturing the health-conscious consumer markets by providing organic foods for their daily intake. Being an attractive world tourist destination while knowing the best quality tea producer, Sri Lanka has attempted to expand its markets since 1983. However, according to Kothalawala et al. (2019), the organic tea consumption of the local people in Sri Lanka becomes lesser than the organic tea consumption of the tourists who visit Sri Lanka annually. To reach organic demand to the peak of the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka, Tea is the universal sign of the hospitality industry; it is essential to identify what factors affect the purchase intention of organic Tea in boutique hotels. Accordingly, this study attempts to identify what factors affect the purchase intention of organic Tea in boutique hotels, with particular reference to the central province of Sri Lanka.

The objectives of this research include identifying the demand patterns for Tea in boutique hotels. Identification of factors affecting the purchase intention of organic Tea in boutique hotels, identification of difficulties faced in purchasing Tea for boutique hotels, and identification of managers' perception of purchasing organic Tea instead of conventional Tea, while motivating the researchers to conduct their studies related to tea and tea tourism, the establishment of a good image of the organic food practices within the community, the motive for the researchers to study the local organic tea demand rather than the export market.

Accordingly, Sumi and Kabir (2018) have examined that product attributes, health benefit issues, environmental concern, trust, and perceived price significantly influence the purchase intention of the organic tea consumer. Another study conducted by Bandara et al. (2021) reveals that the product, marketing, and lifestyle attributes are the main factors influencing the purchase decision of branded Tea by the consumer. According to De Silva (2012), Quality of packaging, Information given in packaging, Quality of packaging material, Brand of the product, Standards, and Quality certifications, Origin of ingredients, and Shelf life of the product, have a positive relationship to the purchasing decision of Value added Tea. At the same time, the Level of income and Level of education have shown a negative relationship to the purchasing decision of Value Added Tea purchasing decision. When studying the available literature on this study, it is identified that the researchers have studied the factors affecting the purchase decision of organic Tea by the final consumer. So this research identifies the literature gap as the purchase intention of organic Tea by boutique hotels as an intermediary.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted, taking Central Province as the study area for the research. Central Province is one of the major tourist destinations connecting the three Districts of Kandy, Matale, and Nuwara-Eliya. Kandy and Nuwara Eliya are the major tea-growing areas in the Central province. To have a good idea regarding the current demand for organic tea in boutique hotels, to identify the main factors affecting on purchase intention of organic tea for the boutique hotels, to identify the difficulties faced while purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels, to identify the managers' perception on purchasing organic tea for the boutique hotels instead of purchasing conventional tea, research needs to get well-defined answers from the respondents. For that, this research needs to find out the answers to these questions based on the thoughts and views of the managers, which are non-numerical data, while adopting a detailed data gathering technique like conducting interviews which is a qualitative technique for the research. According to the SLTDA website, there are 18 approved boutique hotels in Central Province. Among them, only 12 boutique hotels are purchasing organic tea for their hotels. The managerial level perspective will be examined in those 12 boutique hotels in the central province of Sri Lanka. The purposive sampling method was used among the various sampling methods for this research. Since this is a qualitative research approach, the sample will be 12 interviews focused on the managers in the boutique hotels in the central province Sri Lanka, and the thematic analysis was used to analyze the data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The themes of the study were developed based on the research questions and objectives. Accordingly, four main themes were developed, and under them, sub-themes were developed. Regarding the current demand as the first research objective researcher identified two parental themes and seven sub-themes,

Table 1 Themes under 1st objective

1. Current Demand	1.1 Current Pattern	Purchasing	1.1.A: Starting period of purchase 1.1.B: Reason of purchase 1.1.C: Purchasing basis
	1.2 Current Demand based Factors		1.2.A: Quantity 1.2.B: Variety 1.2.C: Popularity 1.2.D: Profit

Regarding identifying main factors affecting purchase intention of organic tea for boutique hotels, the second objective researcher identified one parental theme and six sub-themes.

Table 2 Themes under 2nd objective

2. Main Factors affecting purchase intention of organic tea	2.1 Health benefits
	2.2 Environmental concern
	2.3 Product attribute
	2.4 Perceived quality
	2.5 Trust
	2.6 Perceived price

Regarding the identification of difficulties faced while purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels as the third objective researcher identified one parental theme and six sub-themes.

Table 3 Themes under 3rd objective

3. Difficulties faced while purchasing organic tea	3.1 Lack of awareness
	3.2 Lack of media promotion & marketing
	3.3 Economic & productivity issues with climate changes
	3.4 Poor appearance
	3.5 Inconsistent taste
	3.6 Lack of Government support

Regarding the identification of managers' particular considering factors for purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels as the fourth objective researcher identified one parental theme and seven sub-themes.

Table 4 Themes under 4th objective

4. Managers' special Considering Factors for purchasing organic tea	4.1 Green purchase Interest
	4.2 Free samplings
	4.3 High expending customers
	4.4 Eco labeling
	4.5 Positive reputation
	4.6 Purchase attitude
	4.7 Guest behavior and motivation

The below figure 01 shows the summarized theme visualization of this research study

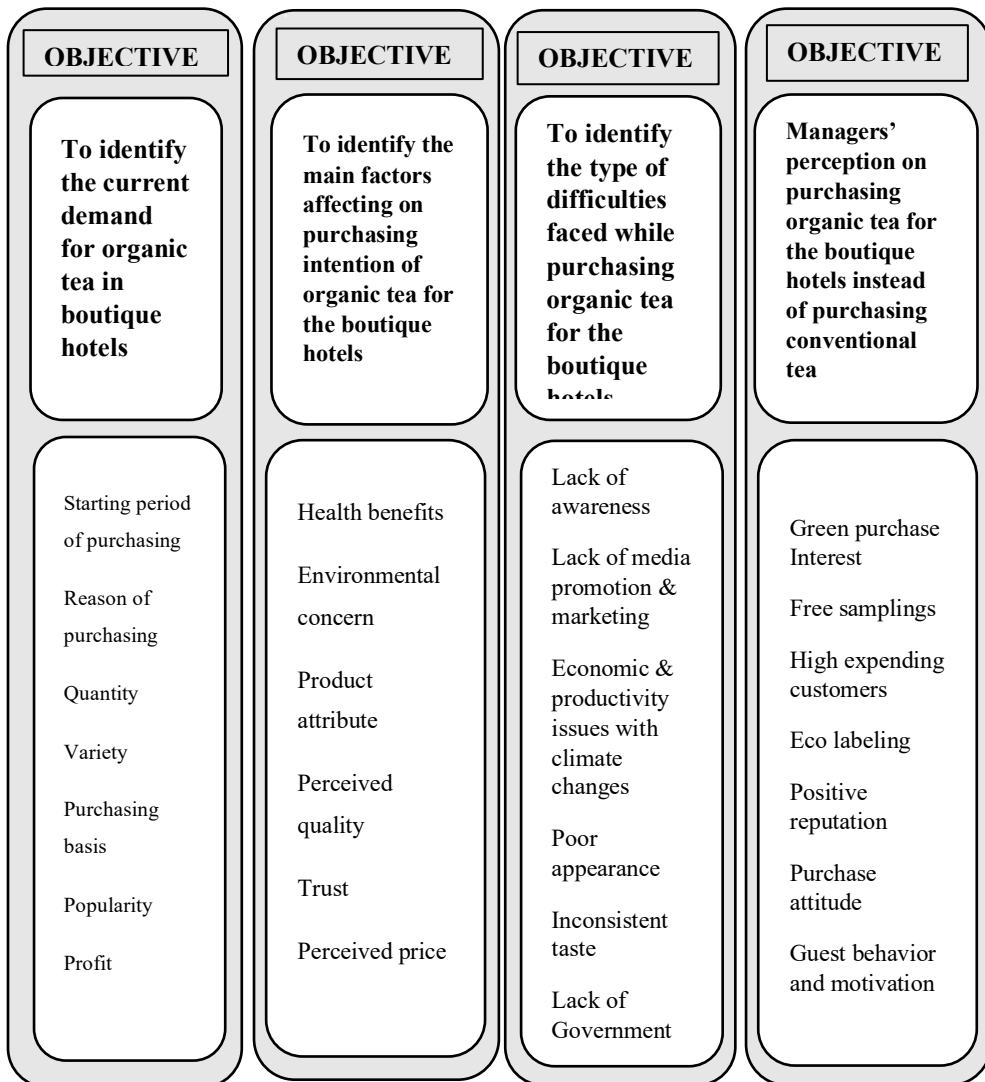


Figure 1 Summarized theme visualization

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMANDATION

According to the first objective, the researcher analyzed the current demand for organic tea in boutique hotels. Mainly there were seven themes used to analyze the first objectives. The findings show good demand for organic tea in boutique hotels. According to the second objective, the main factors affecting purchase intention of organic tea for the boutique hotel managers mentioned how far the health benefits, environmental concern, product attributes, perceived quality, trust, and perceived price affected their intention of buying. At the fourth objective, the researcher identifies the managers' perception of purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels instead of conventional tea. According to the findings, green purchase interest, free samplings, high expending customers, eco-labeling, positive reputation, purchase attitude, guest behavior and motivation.

guest behavior, motivation, and purchase habit were identified as reasons for purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels instead of purchasing conventional tea.

To suggest recommendations, the researcher has used the findings identified in the third objective; difficulties faced while purchasing organic tea for boutique hotels. The recommendations the researcher suggests; include enhancing government involvement and support, organizing organic tea tasting demonstrations and marketing through events, maximizing the awareness about organic tea and its benefits in the hospitality industry, and establishing good promotion and marketing campaign to introduce organic tea to the local community. Invest to enhance organic farming related technology, expand organic tea by targeting its health benefits, establish collaboration and networking among suppliers, focus not only foreigners and high expending customer should focus locals, encourage researchers to conduct more research about organic tea consumption within the country, by giving motivation to buyers, but hotel management should also plan marketing strategies to create consumers' positive attitudes toward organic tea.

Future research can be conducted based on the perception of all other stakeholders like staff members, guests, and suppliers based on all the boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. From the results, many other exciting areas can be further researched, such as factors affecting foreigners' purchasing intention of organic tea, etc.

Keywords: Boutique hotels, hospitality industry, organic tea, purchase intention

REFERENCES

- Bandara, A. M., Gayathri, H. M., & Lankapura, A. I. (2021). Factors affecting the consumer's branded tea purchase decision: A case study in the Western province, Sri Lanka. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*, 67-73. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajebe/2021/v21i1030432>
- Bu, X., Nguyen, H. V., Chou, T. P., & Chen, C.-P. (2020). A comprehensive model of consumers' perceptions, attitudes and behavioral intention toward organic tea: Evidence from an emerging economy. *Sustainability*, 12(16), 6619. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166619>
- De Silva, K. (2012). *FACTORS AFFECTING ON VALUE ADDED TEA PURCHASING*. Retrieved from UWU repository: <http://www.erepo.lib.uwu.ac.lk/handle/123456789/6868>
- James, M. X., Hu, Z., & Leonce, T. E. (2019). Predictors of organic tea purchase intentions by Chinese consumers: attitudes, subjective norms and demographic factors. *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jadee-03-2018-0038>
- Karalliyadda, S. M. C. B., & Kazunari, T. (2020). Compliance of small-scale organic tea farmers with organic standards: A study in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences – Sri Lanka*, 15(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.4038/jas.v15i1.8668>

- Khosravi, S., Malek, A., & Ekiz, E. (2014). Why tourists are attracted to boutique hotels: Case of Penang Island, Malaysia Sharareh. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism*, 26–41.
- Kothalawala, V. A., Mahindaratne, M., & Kahandage, K. (2019). Factors affecting the buying intention of Ceylon organic tea by foreign consumers. *International Research Conference of UWU-2019*. Badulla: University of Uva Wellassa.
- Sudari, S., Tarofder, A., Khatibi, A., & Tham, J. (2019). Measuring the critical effect of marketing mix on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction in food and beverage products. *Management Science Letters*, 1385-1396. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.5.012>
- Sumi, R. S., & Kabir, G. (2018). Factors affecting the buying intention of organic tea consumers of Bangladesh. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*.
- Veal, A. (2018). *Research methods for leisure and tourism*. Harlow: Pearson.