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Factors Influencing Purchase Intention on Branded Coconut Milk Powder: A Case Study in Western Province in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The spray-dried coconut milk powder is a convenient and ready-to-use product with the same freshness as fresh coconut milk. It is time to move towards processed coconut milk products instead of raw coconuts in order to protect the coconut industry. This study was focused to analyze how product factors, consumers' health consciousness, perceived knowledge, advertising, availability, subjective norms, trust, price, and certification influence the branded coconut milk powder purchase intention of consumers. A questionnaire survey was conducted by means of face-to-face interviews to gather primary data from a sample of 400 respondents covering six Divisional Secretariats in the Western province. Data were analyzed by using confirmatory factor analysis through AMOS in SPSS 24 version. The results revealed that trust on the product, product factors, availability, and price are the main factors that influence the coconut milk powder purchase intention of the consumers. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for marketers, producers, investors, and policymakers to enhance the coconut milk powder industry, by implementing necessary product improvements and effective strategies tailored to meet the consumer expectations.

Keywords: Coconut Milk Powder, Consumers, Factors, Purchase Intention, Western Province

1. Introduction

The coconut industry in Sri Lanka has great potential for developing the economy, contributing 0.7% to GDP and 3.3% to total export earnings (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2021) [9]. Coconut is the second most important food and a highly demanded agricultural commodity in Sri Lanka that is closely connected with Sri Lankan culture, food consumption, and the economy (Pathiraja *et al.,* 2015) [27].

In 2021, Sri Lanka produced about 3120 million nuts on an extent of 208,368 ha (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2021) [9] and approximately two-thirds of Sri Lanka's coconut production is consumed locally, while the remaining one-third is used for coconut-based industries and exports to various destinations as value-added products (Coconut Development Authority, 2021) [12]. High local coconut consumption and population growth are the major problems for the processing sector, which is facing a shortage of raw materials. And also, the high local consumption of raw coconut creates a huge waste of coconut in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the shift to value-added coconut products is crucial, which will increase the number of nuts for local industries and export markets too.

Despite the multitude of opportunities for product diversification, the value of coconut is mostly regarded in terms of copra or coconut oil. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and popularize other value-added products, such as coconut milk powder in Sri Lanka. Coconut milk powder is one of the most popular and essential value-added products in the market, with many health benefits such as improved heart health, weight loss, and enhanced cognitive functions (Medical News Today, 2018) [23]. It is a popular substitute for coconut milk whenever and wherever used. Coconut milk powder is a fat-filled product, containing more than 50% of fat, 27.29% carbohydrates, 9.6% protein, 1.75% ash, 0.8 to 2.0% moisture, and 0.02% crude fiber (Muralidharan and Jayashree, 2011) [25]. It has additional advantages over coconut milk, such as less storage space, enhanced shelf-life, and reduced package cost. Sri Lanka is the largest exporter of coconut milk powder according to the world rankings in the year 2018 (Coconut Development Authority, 2021) [12]. In 2021, the production of coconut milk powder in Sri Lanka was 7.88% of the total nut production, and its export volume increased by 10% from 2020 to 2021 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2021) [9]. The increase in coconut milk powder production was a result of the policy initiatives of the government to discourage the consumption of raw coconut. The major markets for coconut milk and coconut milk powder are European countries, the USA, Mexico, Canada, UAE, Australia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and South Africa (Muralidharan and Jayashree, 2011) [25].

Purchase intention, a fundamental aspect of consumer behavior, plays a crucial role in guiding individuals through the intricate decision-making process of selecting a specific brand for their purchase. Researchers, such as Chu and Chen (2019) [10], define purchase intention as the premeditated desire or plan of consumers to acquire a particular product or service in the future. It is a decision-making process that delves into the factors that contribute to a consumer's choice of a specific brand for purchase. This concept holds paramount importance in the realms of marketing and consumer behavior, providing businesses with valuable insights to comprehend and predict consumer demand.

Research has mentioned product factors such as taste, smell, texture, and, colour influence the purchase decisions of different consumers (Kumar and Babu, 2014; Krishna, 2012; Spence, 2016) [21, 20, 30]. These factors play a crucial role in attracting consumers, creating positive perceptions, and influencing their overall evaluation of a product. Consumers evaluate the features and benefits of a product to determine if it meets their needs, preferences, and expectations.

The findings from Alphonce and Alfnes (2012) [1], Grunert et al. (2014) [15], Aschemann et al. (2019) [4], Teixeira, et al. (2022) [32], reveal that health is the primary factor of consumer purchase intention. Health can be defined as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being, encompassing not just the absence of disease or infirmity but also the ability to lead a fulfilling and productive life (World Health Organization, 2021) [37]. Consumers are increasingly concerned about their health and well-being. When a product is perceived to have health benefits, it can positively impact purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to choose products that they believe will contribute to their well-being.

Furthermore, several studies have stated that consumer knowledge is an another factor that influences a product's purchase intention (Ateke and Didia, 2018; Erida and Rangkuti, 2017; Wu et al, 2018) [5, 13, 39]. Consumer knowledge refers to the collective information, beliefs, and experiences that consumers acquire from diverse sources, such as personal usage, word-of-mouth recommendations, and marketing communications (Homburg et al., 2013) [19]. When consumers perceive themselves to be knowledgeable about a particular product or category, they are more likely to feel informed and aware of their options. This increased information and awareness can positively influence their purchase intention by giving them confidence in their decision-making. Further, researchers have mentioned that consumers' product-related knowledge is also a factor that influences purchase intention (Cakici and Shukla, 2017; Tamboto and Pangemanan, 2019; Ozturk, 2022) [8, 31, 26].

Recent studies have highlighted that there is a significant impact of subjective norms on product purchase intention. (Teng and Wang, 2015; Wang et al., 2020) [33, 34]. Subjective norms can be defined as the individual's perception of the social pressures and expectations that originate from others regarding a particular behavior. (Ham et al., 2015) [17]. These subjective norms are influenced by the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of family, friends, colleagues, and reference groups. When individuals perceive that others in their social circle have a positive attitude or inclination towards a particular purchase, they are more likely to be influenced and develop a higher purchase intention.

Moreover, numerous studies have shown that product availability has a significant impact on the purchase intention of consumers (Kumar and Babu, 2014; Weissmann and Hock, 2022) [21, 36]. When a product is readily available and easily accessible to consumers, it increases their convenience in making the purchase. Consumers value convenience and prefer products that are readily accessible in terms of physical availability, online availability, or distribution channels.

According to past studies, advertising is another factor that influences purchase intention (Latif et al., 2011; Amandeep et al., 2017; Mirabi et al., 2015) [22, 2, 24]. Advertising increases consumer awareness of products or services, providing information about their features, benefits, and availability. This awareness can shape consumers' perceptions and generate interest, leading to a higher likelihood of purchase intention.

A study has mentioned that trust is another significant factor in purchase intention for a product (Arnot et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2018) [3, 18]. Trust plays a crucial role in this process, as it represents the willingness of customers to rely on a brand and their perception of the brand's effectiveness in building a positive company image that generates interest in purchasing a product. When customers have a strong belief in a product, it has a significant impact on reducing their uncertainty and increasing their purchase intention.

Price is a critical factor that influences customers' purchasing decisions (Firmansyah, 2021) [14]. According to Brata et al. (2017) [6], as prices become more favorable, there is an increasing tendency for customers to make purchase decisions. When consumers perceive that a product offers a good value proposition in relation to its price, it enhances their purchase intention. If the price is perceived as fair and reasonable based on the benefits and quality of the product, consumers are more likely to be motivated to make a purchase.

Certification is another major factor that affects the purchase intention of a product (Prentice et al., 2019; Watanabe et al., 2021; Wu and Jang, 2014) [28, 35, 38]. When consumers perceive a product or service to be certified, it provides them with a sense of assurance and credibility. This can reduce uncertainty and increase trust in the product or service, influencing their purchase intention positively.

The study and examination of consumer behavior have gained increasing significance as consumers hold a pivotal role as decisive and leading elements in the market. Marketers heavily rely on understanding consumer needs, expectations, and the various factors that impact their purchasing decisions to effectively adopt marketing strategies, develop marketing mix elements, and implement successful marketing programs. The ability to comprehend consumer behavior is vital for marketers to tailor their approaches and offerings accordingly. However, sufficient research has not been conducted in Sri Lanka on the factors that influence consumers' purchase intention of branded coconut milk powder. Due to lack of Knowledge it is beneficial to conduct further researches to understand the influential factors on coconut milk powder consumption Therefore, this study was focused to examine how trust, advertising, availability, certification, perceived knowledge, health consciousness, subjective norms, product factors, and price determine the branded coconut milk powder purchase intention of consumers in Western Province.

The findings and recommendations of the study will be helpful for producers, investors, policymakers, manufactures, vendors, and the government to implement

necessary product improvements, quality enhancement and better strategies for the development of the coconut milk powder industry in Sri Lanka. And also, necessary practices that should be incorporated to coconut milk powder productions to increase the demand by consumers can be proposed.

2. Methodology
2.1 Conceptual Framework
The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1) explains the relationship among product factors, consumers' health consciousness, perceived knowledge, advertising, availability, subjective norms, trust, price, certification, and purchase intention. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H1: Product factors influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H2: Health consciousness Trust influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H3: Perceived knowledge influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H4: Advertising influence branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H5: Product availability influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H6: Subjective norms of the product influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H7: Trust influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.
H8: Price influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.

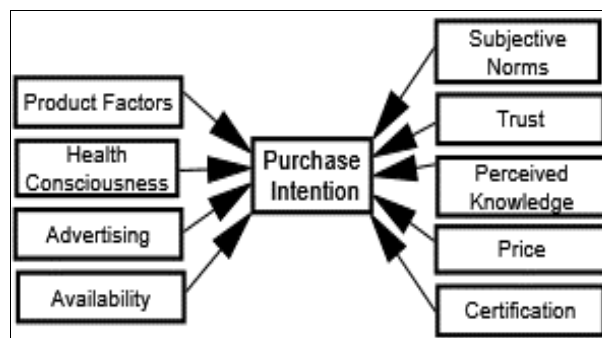H9: certification influences branded coconut milk powder purchase intention.

Fig 1: Proposed conceptual framework

2.2 Data Collection
Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire. A preliminary questionnaire was administered to a sample of twenty potential consumers to conduct a pre-test. Minor adjustments and modifications were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback received during this pre-testing phase. The sample size was 400 consumers selected from the supermarkets. The sample size for the study was determined using the Cochran Formula (Cochran, 1963) [11] with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Consumers were selected from supermarkets based on systematic sampling by interviewing each third consumer who arrived at the supermarket. The supermarkets were selected randomly from six Divisional Secretariat divisions in the Western Province, which were selected based on a multistage sampling method.

Table 1: Likert scale items used to measure the purchase intention

Factor	Indicator name	Likert scale indicators
Product factor	PF1	Good taste of branded coconut milk powder has a significant influence on my purchase decision
	PF2	Dissolving ability of branded coconut milk powder has a significant influence on my purchase decision
	PF3	Long shelf life of branded coconut milk powder has a significant influence on my purchase decision
	PF4	Convenient to use of branded coconut milk powder has a significant influence on my purchase decision
Advertising	AD1	Advertising has a significant influence on my purchase decision of branded coconut milk powder
	AD2	Celebrity character of the advertisement influences me to purchase a branded coconut milk powder
	AD3	Advertising provides sufficient information about the branded coconut milk powder thus has a significant influence on my purchase decision of branded coconut milk powder
Subjective Norms	SN3	I consume branded coconut milk powder as consumed by people around me.
	SN4	My family promotes I should buy branded coconut milk powder instead of raw coconut due to easiness
	SN5	My friends promotes I should buy branded coconut milk powder instead of raw coconut
Perceived Knowledge	PK1	My knowledge about the branded coconut milk powder has a significant influence on my purchase decision
	PK2	I'm personally enough knowledgeable about the ingredients in the braded coconut milk powder
	PK3	I believe that my knowledge is enough regarding the branded coconut milk powder to take purchase decision
	PK4	I am knowledgeable to evaluate different branded coconut milk powder products
	PK5	People in the society are sufficiently knowledgeable about branded coconut milk powder products in the market
Health Consciousness	HC2	I believe branded coconut milk powder is healthier to consume
	HC4	I believe branded coconut milk powder does not contain harmful chemicals
	HC5	I believe branded coconut milk powder does not created any health problem (allergies, Daria)
Price Attitude	PA1	Price is affordable for branded coconut milk powder
	PA3	If price is low, I prefer to but it
	PA4	If the price of the branded coconut milk powder is increased I will switch for alternatives
	PA5	Even though price is higher for branded coconut milk powder, I buy it
Trust on product	TP1	I believe quality of the branded coconut milk powder is at acceptable level
	TP2	I believe branded coconut milk powder production process is standard
	TP3	I believe the packaging system of branded coconut milk powder product is safe
	TP4	I believe machineries that are using to branded coconut milk powder production maintain relevant quality standard
Availability	AV1	Availability of the branded coconut milk powder product has a significant influence on my purchase

		decision
	AV2	Poor availability of branded coconut milk powder product creates me a barrier for purchase
	AV3	If the branded coconut milk powder is not available, I visit another place to buy the branded coconut milk powder
	AV5	Coconut milk powder is always available in the supermarkets
Certification	CF2	I believe the SLS, ISO, CDA(Coconut Development Authority)certification
	CF3	I trust certified branded coconut milk powder is in higher quality
-Purchase Intention	PI1	Usually, I wish to buy branded coconut milk powder
	PI4	I like to buy branded coconut milk powder forever
	PI5	I plan to purchase branded coconut milk powder even in the future
	PI6	I strongly recommend others to use the branded coconut milk powder instead of raw coconut

2.3 Measures
The questionnaire was comprised of demographic factors and nine other factors, namely product factors, consumers' health consciousness, perceived knowledge, advertising, availability, subjective norms, trust, price, and certification. The dependent variable was the consumer's purchase intention. A total of forty-nine indicators were used to measure these factors and purchase intention. All indicators were assessed by a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 was denoted "strongly disagree" and 5 was denoted "strongly agree". Table 1 provides summery of all the indicators categorized under each factor.

2.4 Data Analysis
The adequacy of the sample for multivariate analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, ensuring that the data was suitable for analysis. To further verify the integrity of the multivariate analysis, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed, following the guidelines proposed by Rohlf (2009) [29], to ensure that the analysis was not distorted.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic factors, while Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was used to evaluate the reliability of each factor. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to evaluate the validity of the measurement model. To examine the proposed model, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used, employing the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) in SPSS 24 version. The estimates were based on the maximum likelihood estimation technique.

3. Results and Discussion
3.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample
The majority of the respondents were women (68.8%) and 31.2% were men in the studied population (Table 2). Population contained 44%, 40%, and 16% in the age groups of 16-30, 31-50, and above 50 respectively. Among the respondents, 5% had primary education while others had above that level. The majority of the sample was in the secondary level of education (50%). Among the population, 63% were employed and 77% represented above LKR 35,000 income level.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Parameter	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	31.2
	Female	68.8
Age	16-30 years	43.5
	31-50 years	40.3
	51 and above	16.2
Employment Status	Unemployed	37.0
	Employed	63.0
Monthly Income	Less than 15,000	8.0
	15,001-35,000	15.0.
	35,001- 60,000	31.3
	Above 60,000	45.7
Educational Level	Primary	4.8
	Secondary	50.2
	Tertiary	45.0
Ethnicity	Sinhala	92.8
	Tamil	5.0
	Muslim	2.2

3.2 Sampling Adequacy
To verify the factorability of the data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of sphericity (BTS) were conducted. The KMO test evaluates whether the data is suitable for factor analysis, with a recommended threshold value of at least 0.60. Additionally, the BTS assesses the significance of the correlation matrix, with a threshold of P < 0.1. The results of both tests, as shown in Table 3, met the minimum requirements, indicating that the data was suitable for further factor analysis.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.801
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	101108.049
df	1176
Probability	0.000

3.3 Reliability Statistics
Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess internal consistency, with a threshold of 0.7 indicating acceptability (Hair *et al*., 1998) [16]. According to table 5, all factors

exhibited internal consistencies above this threshold, signifying acceptable consistency within their indicators. The composite reliability (CR) coefficients for all the factors in the model surpass the threshold of 0.6, indicating a high level of reliability. This indicates that the model exhibits strong internal consistency and reliability in measuring the factors. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were found to be greater than 0.5, indicating that the model has a good level of convergent validity.

3.4 Assessment of Fitness for the Structural Model: Evaluating the Goodness of Fit

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to validate the proposed model and assess the overall quality of the measurement model. The maximum likelihood method was utilized for model estimation, and multiple fit indices were used to evaluate the model fit, as presented in Table 4. The chi-square value for the model (212.002) was statistically significant ($\chi^2/df = 1.887$), with a root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.037, goodness-of-fit (GFI) of 0.944, adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI) of 0.889, and comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.901. These indices surpassed the recommended threshold levels (Byrne, 2016) [7], validating that the measurement components aligned well with their underlying factors.

Table 4: Goodness of fit indices

Category Attained	Indices	Recommended Least	Value
Absolute	χ^2	$p < 0.05$	0.000
	GFI	$p > 0.90$	0.93
	RMSEA	$p < 0.08$	0.07
Incremental Fit	AGFI	$p > 0.90$	0.91
	CFI	$p > 0.90$	0.92
	T-LI	$p > 0.90$	0.89
	NFI	$p > 0.90$	0.92
Parsimonious Fit	CMIN/DF	<3	2.561

3.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results

The model initially used 49 indicators, all of which exhibited insufficient fit. As a result, twelve indicators with low factor loadings (below 0.05) and insignificance (at p=0.05) were removed, including PA5, HC1, HC3, HC6, SN1, SN2, SN6, CF1, PA2, PI2, PI3, and AV4. Table 5 presents the re-estimated results, indicating that all standardized estimates are statistically significant, except for the PK2 indicator variable. The remaining indicators effectively reflect their respective latent variables (Factors), except for PK2, which indicates that knowledge of coconut milk powder ingredients does not contribute to the perceived knowledge factor. Among the remaining indicators, PF4 has the highest factor loading (0.871) for the product factor, indicating the convenience of the use of coconut milk powder. SN4 has the highest factor loading (0.643) for subjective norms, indicating that family influences to buy coconut milk powder due to easiness. TP1 has the highest factor loading (0.842) towards the trust, indicating the quality of coconut milk powder. PK1 has the highest factor loading (0.784) for perceived knowledge, indicating that the personnel's knowledge about coconut milk powder highly reflects the factor of perceived knowledge. HC5 has the highest factor loading (0.826) for health consciousness, indicating that there are no health risks associated with consuming coconut milk powder. PA3 has the highest factor loading (0.879) for the price, indicating that my preference for purchasing it when the price is low highly reflects the price factor. AV5 has the highest factor loading (0.862) for availability, indicating the consistent availability of coconut milk powder in supermarkets. AD1 has the highest factor loading (0.783) for advertising, indicating that advertisements for coconut milk powder highly reflect the advertising factor.

Finally, CF3 has the highest factor loading (0.927) for certification, indicating trust in certified coconut milk powder as being of higher quality. PI1 has the highest factor loading (0.824) for purchase intention, indicating that the desire to usually buy coconut milk powder highly reflects purchase intention.

Table 5: Confirmatory factor analysis output

Construct	Estimate of items	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Product Factors		0.764	0.734	
PF1	0.512***			0.510
PF2	0.562***			0.522
PF3	0.718***			0.567
PF4	0.871***			0.601
Subjective Norms		0.714	0.751	
SN3	0.531***			0.620
SN4	0.643***			0.641
SN5	0.583***			0.588
Price		0.701	0.738	
PA1	0.674***			0.758
PA3	0.879***			0.678
PA4	0.537***			0.699
PA5	0.521***			0.731
Advertising		0.713	0.708	
AD1	0.783***			0.667
AD2	0.584***			0.624
AD3	0.532***			0.599
Availability		0.812	0.785	
AV1	0.813***			0.750
AV2	0.626***			0.666
AV3	0.561***			0.689
AV5	0.862***			0.710
Perceived Knowledge		0.804	0.749	

PK1	0.784***			0.510
PK2	0.559			0.577
PK3	0.671***			0.569
PK4	0.561***			0.505
PK5	0.519**			0.589
Certification		0.710	0.759	
CF2	0.721***			0.666
CF3	0.927***			0.693
Health Consciousness		0.733	0.726	
HC2	0.731***			0.567
HC4	0.678***			0.603
HC5	0.826***			0.612
Trust		0.880		
TP1	0.842***			0.559
TP2	0.529***			0.589
TP3	0.668***			0.572
TP4	0.513***			0.539
TP5	0.739***			0.606
Purchase Intention		0.779		
PI1	0.824***			0.702
PI4	0.559***			0.675
PI5	0.582***			0.682
PI6	0.621***			0.714

Levels of statistical significance, ***P<0.001

Standardized Regression Weight analysis shows that (Table 6) consumers' intention to purchase branded coconut milk powder is positively influenced by product factors, trust on branded coconut milk powder, and the availability of branded coconut milk powder.

There were four indicators under product factors, which are the taste of coconut milk powder, dissolving ability, shelf life, and convenience of using coconut milk powder. The results suggest that product factors are significant factors for branded coconut milk powder purchase intention (SRW 0.311, P < 0.001), suggesting support for hypothesis five (H1). The study's findings suggest that incorporating product developments, specifically those related to product factors, can contribute to the improvement of the coconut milk powder market.

Trust was measured using five indicators, which evaluated the safety of packaging, the safety of the production process, quality machinery, quality of product, and label information. Trust was found to be another significant factor that influences purchase intention (SRW 0.251, P < 0.001). Based on that the findings of the study provide evidence to support hypothesis two (H7), which suggests that incorporating quality developments within the trust construct can contribute to the improvement of the coconut milk powder market.

The factor of availability highly influences the purchase intention of branded coconut milk powder (SRW 0.211, P < 0.001), suggesting support for hypothesis five (H5). These results indicate that the availability of the product plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' intention to purchase branded coconut milk powder.

The price of the branded coconut milk powder shows a significant negative impact on purchase intention (SRW -0.182, P < 0.001), suggesting support for hypothesis five (H8). The results do not support the hypotheses H3, H6, H2, H4, and H9 indicating that the purchase intention of coconut milk powder is not significantly influenced by factors such as perceived knowledge, subjective norms, health consciousness, advertising, and certification. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sri Lankan consumers tend to buy branded coconut milk powder based on their trust in the product, product factors, availability, and price.

Table 6: Standardized regression weight

Relationship	Estimate
Purchase intention← Product factors	0.311***
Purchase intention← Subjective Norms	0.033
Purchase intention← Advertising	0.052
Purchase intention← certification	0.034
Purchase intention← Availability	0.211***
Purchase intention← Trust	0.251***
Purchase intention← Health Consciousness	0.042
Purchase intention← Price	-0.182***
Purchase intention← Perceived Knowledge	0.073

Levels of statistical significance, ***P<0.001
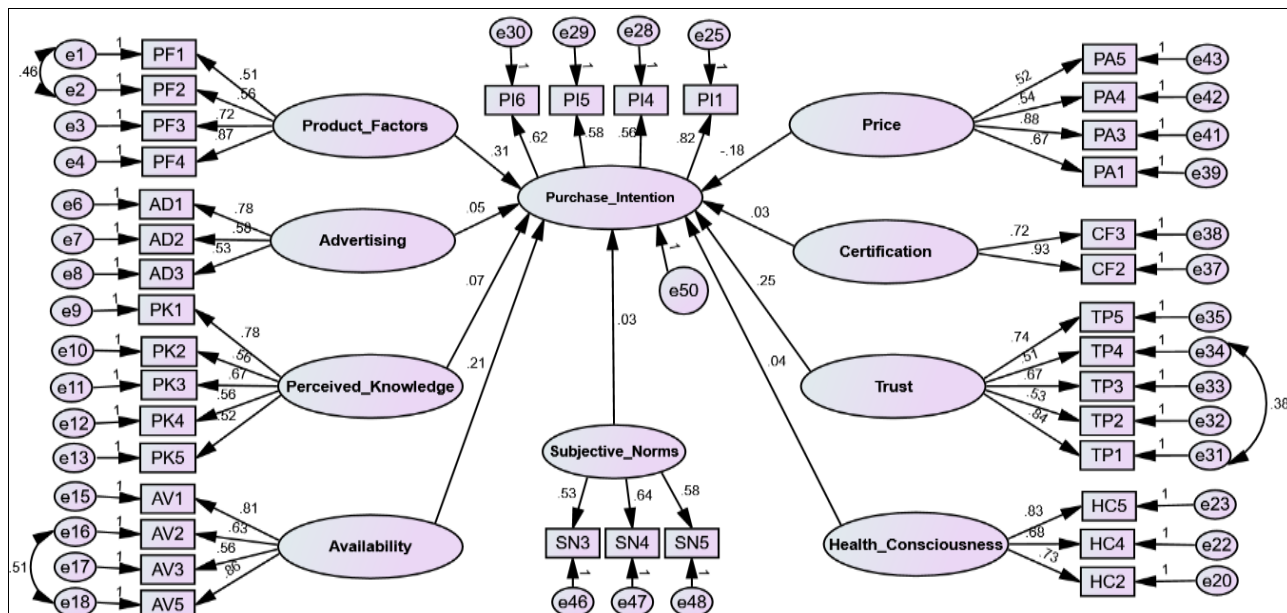
PF:Product factors, PF1:Taste, PF2:Dissolving ability, PF3:Long shelf life, PF4: Convenient to use, TP: Trust, TP1 : Quality of product, TP2:Standard production process, TP3:Safety of packaging, TP4:Standard machines, TP5:Trust on label information, HC :Health consciousness, HC2:Healthier to consume, HC4: Not contain harmful chemicals, HC5:No health risk, PK: Perceived knowledge, PK1:Personnel knowledge, PK2:Knowledge of ingredients, PK3:Enough Knowledge, PK4:Knowledgeable to evaluate different products, PK5:Knowledge of the society, AV: Availability, AV1: Availability of the product, AV2: Poor availability, AV3: Visit another place to purchase, AV5: Availability in supermarkets, PA : price, PA1:Affordable price, PA3:Low price, PA4:Effect of high price, PA5: Even though price is higher I buy it, SN:Subjective norms, SN3:People influence, SN4:Family influence, SN5:Friend influence, AD : Advertising, AD1:Advertisments influence, AD2:Celebrit character of advertisement, AD3:Advertising provides sufficient information, CF:Certification, CF2:Believe the cerifications, CF3:High quality of certified products, PI:Purchase intention, PI1:Like to purchase, PI4:Like to buy forever, PI5:Plan to buy even in the future, PI6:Recommend others to use

Fig 2: Structural relationship between purchase intention and factors

4. Conclusions

The study revealed that Sri Lankan consumers tend to buy branded coconut milk powder based on trust in the product, product factors, availability, and price. This study provides several recommendations at the policy level as well as at the industry level. The attributes like good taste, long shelf life, dissolving ability, and convenience to use should be in coconut milk powder product to enhance consumer purchase intention. This recommendation highlights the importance of considering product factors as a strategy for market enhancement and growth in the local milk powder industry. Maintaining quality standards, implementing safety measures in the production process and packaging system, and ensuring accurate and truthful information on the label are important for enhancing trust on the coconut milk powder product and purchase intention. By focusing on these recommendations, trust-building efforts can be strengthened in the local milk powder market. Building trust is vital for improving market performance and meeting consumer expectations. When consumers trust the coconut milk powder product, they are more likely to develop a positive perception of the brand and exhibit a higher purchase intention. Trust serves as a foundation for long-term customer loyalty and repeat purchases, contributing to the overall success of the brand and the industry as a whole. The availability of coconut milk powder near their homes and the convenient locations of shops are also important. Producers should pay attention to increasing the availability of coconut milk powder sufficiently, and the government can support this by providing financial incentives, investing in infrastructure development, promoting research and development, establishing partnerships with the private sector, encouraging the use of innovative technologies, and implementing regulations and policies that support the production of the coconut milk powder in the country. Therefore, efforts should be made to ensure the product is widely available in various retail outlets and o market places, considering consumer convenience and ease of access. To increase the consumption of coconut milk powder, producers can reduce prices and improve quality simultaneously, while marketing companies can modify their targeting strategies to fit consumer expectations. Overall, these recommendations can help to enhance the availability of the product, trust on the product, product attitude, and preference for branded coconut milk powder among Sri Lankan consumers. And also, these suggestions have the potential to generate positive outcomes for producers, investors, policymakers, marketers, and the government. The findings of the study are useful to develop policies and marketing strategies that meet consumer expectations and promote coconut milk powder consumption.

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