

The mediating role of mobile usage behaviour in consumer preferences for food and beverages retail performance: A study in Delhi-NCR

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ABSTRACT

The food and beverage retail industry is undergoing substantial transformations as consumer preferences shift and technology develops. Mobile devices have become an increasingly important part of the consumer experience, influencing both purchasing decisions and retail performance. This study investigates how mobile usage influences consumer preferences and the performance of food and beverage retailers in Delhi-NCR.

Methodology: This study employs a quantitative survey of 363 customers from the Delhi-NCR area. The data was examined using SPSS Amos and a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique to find mediating components.

Findings: The study found that consumer preferences had a significant impact on the performance of food and beverage shops in Delhi-NCR. Quality, variety, cost, convenience, and well-organised store layouts all contribute to a better shopping experience and higher consumer satisfaction. Mobile devices have emerged as an important mediator, bridging the gap between consumer preferences and retail success. Customers routinely utilise mobile devices to search for product information, compare prices, use digital coupons, and complete purchases, indicating their relevance in modern shopping. The findings also emphasise the growing importance of tailored recommendations and digital convenience in driving mobile usage.

Originality/value: The influence of mobile devices on consumer behaviour is clear. This study provides valuable information for food and beverage companies, helping them to enhance their strategy for improving client experiences and remaining competitive in an ever-changing industry.

KEYWORDS: Consumer preferences, retail performance, mobile usage patterns, food and beverage, SEM, Delhi-NCR

INTRODUCTION

The retail sector is rapidly increasing, driven by consumer preferences. Customers today value more than simple products; they value convenience, tailored services, and real-time engagement with brands (Um, Chung and Stienmetz, 2023). This transition is especially noticeable in the food and beverage business, where customers expect personalised, frictionless experiences. Individuals are increasingly looking for services that cater to their specific preferences and interests, whether ordering takeaway, dining out, or going grocery shopping, highlighting the necessity of adaptability in today's market.

The widespread use of mobile devices has changed the way consumers interact with retailers. Smartphone penetration in India has reached an all-time high, with more than one billion people (about 71% of the

population) predicted to own one by 2023. Statista (2023) projects that this figure will rise to 1.55 billion by 2040. The growing use of mobile devices has opened up significant opportunities for businesses, especially in the food and beverage sector. Customers now increasingly prioritise convenience and a variety of product options. Many retail customers rely on their smartphones not just to buy F&B products but also to compare prices, explore menus, place orders, read reviews, and make digital payments (Robayo-Pinzon *et al.*, 2021; Pop, Hlédik and Dabija, 2023).

Between 2019 and 2023, the prevalence of online meal delivery services in India expanded significantly from 8% to 12% (The Hindu, 2024). This swift expansion has enhanced the whole consumer experience, influencing purchasing decisions and increasing loyalty. As a result, consumer preferences are increasingly linked to mobile usage, which has a considerable impact on store performance. Consumers prioritise convenience, quality assurance, diverse product offerings, excellent customer service, competitive pricing, and a pleasant shopping experience (Basu, Guin and Sengupta, 2014; Gibson, Hsu and Zhou, 2022; Peulić *et al.*, 2023; Gupta and Mukherjee, 2024).

Despite the growing importance of mobile usage in defining consumer behaviour, there is still a dearth of understanding about how this conduct affects the relationship between customer preferences and retail performance, particularly in the food and beverage sector. Previous research (Waheed *et al.*, 2021; Aiolfi, Bellini and Grandi, 2022) has mostly focused on how mobile phone usage influences consumer decision-making. However, little research has been conducted on its impact on consumer preferences and the performance of food and beverage businesses. This study seeks to fill that gap by looking into how mobile usage influences the relationship between consumer preferences and retail performance in the Delhi-NCR food and beverage industry. The findings will provide retailers with significant knowledge of how mobile platforms may be used to engage customers, increase sales, and improve overall business performance in this fast-changing industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a) The role of consumer preferences in retail food and beverages performance

Consumer preferences, which reflect consumer purchasing decisions and interests, have a crucial role in the retail success of the food and beverage business (Mishra and Vishvas, 2019). Numerous factors influence these decisions, including necessities, interests, and personal preferences. Product diversity is essential for influencing consumer decisions in retail. Customers usually desire a varied range of food and beverage options to match their individual preferences and nutritional requirements (Santos, Sampaio and Alliprandini, 2020). Retailers who offer a more broad selection are more likely to attract a larger customer base. Businesses that increase their product offerings not only meet consumer expectations but also drive revenue growth (Sweeney *et al.*, 2023). Product quality is another major aspect in determining consumer preferences. Freshness and high standards are especially important in the food and beverage business (Zheng *et al.*, 2020). High-quality products foster customer trust and loyalty, resulting in repeat purchases and long-term support (Basu, Guin and Sengupta, 2014). Retailers who value quality have better customer retention, which leads to higher long-term revenue. In today's fast-paced world, convenience is even more vital. Consumers prefer stores that are conveniently located (Marques *et al.*, 2021). Factors such as quick checkout processes and minimal crowding contribute to a positive customer experience (Marikyan, Pantano and Scarpi de Claricini, 2023; Nusrat and Huang, 2024). Retailers who optimise their store layouts and implement speedy checkout processes receive higher customer satisfaction ratings, which has a direct impact on store performance (Grewal *et al.*, 2023). Pricing has a significant impact on consumer choices (Zhao *et al.*, 2021). Many people are price-sensitive and seek out stores that provide the most value for their money.

According to Büyükdag, Soysal and Kitapci (2020), offering competitive prices, discounts, and sales attract customers. Retailers who give frequent discounts and maintain competitive prices enjoy a competitive advantage (Park, Jung and Choi, 2020). Customer service is also a major priority. Customers choose places with friendly, well-trained, and knowledgeable staff who can provide assistance and product information. 90% of customers are more likely to purchase when they are assisted by knowledgeable in-store staff (Wang and Wang, 2022). Friendly interactions and exceptional service foster a positive image, which increases the possibility of repeat purchases. Prioritising customer service in retail leads to greater customer relationships and increased revenues (Tomašević, Gašević and Vranješ, 2020). The overall shopping experience also has a significant impact on consumer choices. A store's ambience and organisation contribute to how customers perceive their shopping journey (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2021). Consumers are more likely to return to stores that offer a pleasant environment with well-organised shelves and a welcoming atmosphere (Khan *et al.*, 2023). Retailers who invest in improving the shopping experience expect higher foot traffic and overall sales performance (Katakam *et al.*, 2021). The poor understanding of how consumer preferences influence retail performance in the food and beverage industry reveals a huge research gap. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis to address this issue:

Hypothesis 1: Consumer preferences impact retail performance in the food and beverage sector.

b) The role of consumer preferences in mobile usage behaviour

Consumer preferences have a huge impact on mobile usage behaviour, especially in today's digital age, where technology is deeply ingrained in everyday life. The increased need for convenience in the food and beverage industry has increased mobile app usage. Customers increasingly prefer platforms that make it easier to compare prices, browse menus, scan QR codes, place orders, and pay with mobile devices. Luceri *et al.* (2022) discovered that those who value convenience are more likely to utilise mobile apps for food delivery or takeaway services. This preference for speed and convenience has transformed mobile usage habits, making it a primary priority for organisations seeking to meet customer expectations.

Personalisation also plays an important role in how consumers use mobile applications. Khan *et al.* (2023) discovered that apps that deliver personalised experiences receive more engagement and usage than generic ones. In the food and beverage industry, elements such as customisable meal planning or drink recommendations appeal to users who appreciate individualised options. The link between consumer preferences for customisation and mobile usage patterns underlines the need to cater to individual preferences in enhancing app usage and customer satisfaction.

The rising need for real-time information has a significant impact on mobile usage habits (Aiolfi, Bellini and Grandi, 2022). Consumers increasingly desire to receive updates on shipment timelines, product availability, and ongoing promotions immediately on their mobile devices. This tendency is especially noticeable in the food and beverage industry, where customers frequently check the status of their orders or look for the latest restaurant deals. Studies (Pantano and Priporas, 2016; Vakeel *et al.*, 2023) show that real-time information has a considerable impact on mobile app usage. Customers prefer systems that let them follow food deliveries in real time, which influences how they use their devices.

Growing health awareness has had a tremendous impact on consumer preferences and mobile usage patterns. More health-conscious individuals prefer mobile systems that provide exact nutritional information, calorie counts, and component breakdowns (Eicher-Miller, Prapkree and Palacios, 2021). This emphasis on health and wellness has changed how frequently and broadly mobile platforms are used, particularly in the food and beverage industry, where these technologies help guide healthier choices.

The growth of loyalty programs and digital discount systems in mobile apps has significantly influenced customer preferences and mobile usage behaviours. People are increasingly choosing mobile platforms that reward frequent purchases with points or digital coupons, which is particularly visible in the food and beverage business. Cavalinhos, Marques and Salgueiro (2021) and Zhou, Lu and Yu (2023) discovered that loyalty programs promote mobile app usage as customers strive to maximise their benefits. Despite this, there is still a lack of understanding about how shifting consumer preferences in the food and beverage industry influence mobile usage trends. This gap in understanding highlights the need for more research. Based on these data, the following hypothesis has been proposed to address the emergent dynamics.

Hypothesis 2: Consumer preferences for food and beverages impact mobile usage behaviour.

c) Mobile usage behaviour among consumers today and its impact on retail performance

In recent years, smartphone use has had a significant impact on consumer behaviour, particularly in terms of retail experiences. Mobile technology has a significant impact on consumer decisions (Aiolfi, Bellini and Grandi, 2022). Before making a purchase, modern buyers use their mobile devices to compare prices, research products, and read reviews. Studies (Robayo-Pinzon *et al.*, 2021; Pop, Hlédik and Dabija, 2023) suggest that mobile usage helps consumers make more informed and timely decisions, which directly affects their preferences and, subsequently, their purchasing patterns. Furthermore, mobile technology enables customers to interact with businesses in actual time. For example, mobile notifications about incredible discounts or unique deals encourage customers to make spontaneous purchases (Um, Chung and Stienmetz, 2023). This real-time connectivity has increased foot traffic in physical stores as well as online food and beverage orders, indicating a direct relationship between mobile usage and retail success in the food and beverage business.

The rapid expansion of mobile app usage for browsing and shopping has opened up new options for businesses to increase client engagement and revenue. Mobile data analytics can help retailers gain significant insights into consumer behaviour, preferences, and purchasing trends. This data enables retail organisations to improve their marketing strategy and execute more focused ads (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2021). Food and beverage companies, for example, can use mobile user data to deliver personalised offers based on consumer interests, hence increasing customer engagement and profitability. Mobile apps and mobile-friendly websites are increasingly important tools for retail businesses, allowing them to offer targeted discounts, accept mobile payments, and give a personalised shopping experience (Molinillo *et al.*, 2022). These customised interactions increase consumer pleasure, which enhances brand loyalty and retention rates, ultimately improving overall business performance (Tyrväinen and Karjaluo, 2019; Molinillo *et al.*, 2022). Mobile technology has changed the food and beverage industry. Quick-service restaurants and cafes are increasingly turning to smartphone ordering and in-app promotions to increase operational efficiency and profitability. Location-specific offers, push alerts, and loyalty rewards all have measurable effects on customer behaviour (McLean *et al.*, 2020). These mobile-mediated interactions influence purchasing decisions by convincing customers to follow advice or transfer companies based on smartphone recommendations. This highlights the clear link between mobile technologies and improved retail performance. Studies (Liu, Ji and Ji, 2022; Mohamed, 2023) also suggest that organisations that invest in mobile technology to optimise the customer journey have greater sales growth and market performance. Nonetheless, there is currently a lack of understanding of the exact processes by which mobile usage behaviour influences the relationship between consumer preferences and retail performance in the food and beverage industry, underlining a critical research gap. Thus, we suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: Mobile usage behaviour mediates the relationship between consumer preferences and retail performance in the food and beverage sector.

d) Conceptual framework

Based on the findings of the literature review the following conceptual framework is formulated.

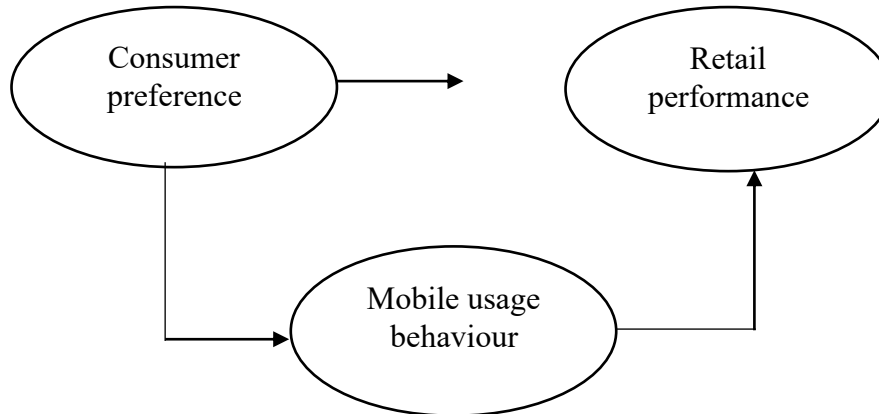


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Herein, consumer preference has been taken as an independent variable; retail performance as a dependent variable; and mobile usage behaviour as a mediating variable. The figure shows that consumer preferences directly influence retail performance and also do so indirectly through mobile usage behaviour, which serves as a mediator.

Research Methodology

This study applied an interpretivism research philosophy to investigate how mobile usage influences consumer preferences and food and beverage business performance in Delhi-NCR. Using an interpretivism research philosophy (Sanchez *et al.*, 2023), the emphasis was on understanding subjective insights rather than broad outcomes. An epistemological research paradigm guided the in-depth analysis of the relationship between mobile usage, consumer preferences, and retail performance, incorporating both literature and empirical evidence (Moon *et al.*, 2021). Employing an explanatory research design (Bentouhami, Casas and Weyler, 2021) with a quantitative approach, the study systematically developed and tested hypotheses to derive statistically significant findings.

The data for this study were collected through an online survey, targeting consumers who frequently purchase food and beverage products either through physical store visits or online food ordering platforms in the Delhi-NCR region, including Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, and Ghaziabad. The retail focus includes large and medium-sized food and beverage chains, such as Big Bazaar, Reliance Fresh, and Spencer's, as well as popular food delivery platforms like Zomato and Swiggy. The respondents were selected using a snowball sampling technique, where initial participants referred others within their networks (Leighton *et al.*, 2021). The inclusion criteria were based on two main factors: regular usage of mobile devices for shopping (both in-store and online) and a minimum of one food or beverage purchase within the previous month. A screening question: "Do you frequently purchase food and beverages using your mobile device through online platforms or in-store mobile-enabled services?" was included to ensure the eligibility of respondents and guarantee the relevance of their responses based on their recent experiences. Only those who answered

positively to this screening question were considered eligible for participation in the survey. The data collection was done over seven months. A total of 2100 questionnaires were administered. A total of 363 valid responses were retained for analysis after excluding incomplete or inconsistent responses.

Following exhaustive literature research, a structured, closed-ended questionnaire was created, which had two primary sections: demographic information and inferential questions about the hypotheses. The demographic component collected basic information about participants, and the inferential section asked them to rate statements linked to several constructs using established scales from previous research. Specifically, the 11-item consumer preferences scale was adapted from (Basu, Guin and Sengupta, 2014), and a 9-item mobile usage behaviour scale from (Aiolfi, Bellini and Grandi, 2022). Two of the elements which were important in this study, i.e., personalisation and health, were missing in the chosen scale; therefore were developed specifically for this study in addition to the 5-item retail performance scale. The data was evaluated with SPSS AMOS, which included frequency analysis for demographic data and PLS-SEM for hypothesis testing. Measures of validity and reliability included composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE). Ethical considerations included gaining informed consent, maintaining anonymity, and adhering to Harvard citation requirements for secondary data.

Data analysis

To analyse the influence of consumer preferences on retail performance, the demographic traits of 363 selected consumers were initially examined.

Table 1: Demographics of survey respondents (n=363)

Characteristic	Item	Frequency (n=363)	Percent (%)
Age	18-25 years	109	30
	26-35 years	127	35
	36-45 years	73	20.1
	46 years and above	54	14.9
Gender	Male	189	52.1
	Female	174	47.9
Occupation	Student	91	25.1
	Employed	182	50.1
	Self-employed	54	14.9
	Unemployed	36	9.9
Education Level	High school	73	20.1
	Undergraduate degree	160	44.1
	Postgraduate degree	100	27.5
	Doctorate	30	8.3
Monthly Income	Less than ₹20,000	54	14.9
	₹20,000 - ₹50,000	160	44.1
	₹50,000 - ₹1,00,000	109	30
	More than ₹1,00,000	40	11
Marital Status	Single	218	60.1
	Married	145	39.9
Area of Residence	Delhi	145	39.9

Noida	73	20.1
Gurgaon	91	25.1
Ghaziabad	54	14.9

In the statistical research undertaken to investigate the impact of consumer preferences, the questionnaire was developed around three major aspects: consumer preferences, retail performance, and mobile usage behaviour. These factors served as the foundation for building the model that tested the hypotheses of the study. Hair et al., (2021) and Chan and Lay (2018) emphasise the importance of verifying the reliability and validity of the data before applying the PLS-SEM model. These academicians believe that Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) should be more than 0.6. Table 1 shows the reliability analysis results for this study, which show that the CR values range from 0.94 to 0.97, and Cronbach's alpha values are likewise within this range. These values above the required threshold demonstrate the model's robust reliability. Furthermore, for convergent validity, Hair et al., (2021) suggest using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which should be greater than 0.5. The data reveal that all constructs meet these criteria, indicating convergent validity. Furthermore, the factor loadings for all items are greater than 0.5, showing that each item accurately evaluates its construct. As a result, the model's variables have been demonstrated to be both reliable and valid, ensuring that future hypothesis testing is thorough and accurate.

Table 2: Reliability and validity measures

Statements	Codes	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
Consumer preferences					
Wide variety	CP1	0.96	0.95	0.65	0.95
Fresh, high-quality food	CP2	0.90			
Convenience of location	CP3	0.78			
Preference for ongoing sales	CP4	0.91			
Best price	CP5	0.70			
Lowest prices	CP6	0.61			
Helpful, trained and knowledgeable staff	CP7	0.92			
Fast checkout preference	CP8	0.84			
Store with nice ambience	CP9	0.72			
Organised stores	CP10	0.81			
Less crowded stores	CP11	0.66			
Retail performance					
Stores are well-stocked	RP1	0.90	0.97	0.75	0.97
The staff are knowledgeable and helpful	RP2	0.86			
Store atmosphere enhances the experience	RP3	0.87			
Regular promotions and discounts	RP4	0.86			
Store convenience increases purchase frequency	RP5	0.88			
Mobile usage behaviour					
Check the digital shopping list	MU1	0.89	0.94	0.76	0.94
View promotions on apps	MU2	0.88			
Look up product info	MU3	0.96			
Make calculations	MU4	0.91			

Make payments	MU5	0.89
Compare prices with other retailers	MU6	0.86
Scan QR codes	MU7	0.83
Use digital coupons	MU8	0.85
Visit the retailer's website	MU9	0.86
Access health and nutrition info	MU10	0.78
Get personalised recommendations	MU11	0.78

Table 3 displays the findings of the discriminant validity test, revealing that the square root values of the AVE for all constructs exceed their inter-construct correlations. This indicates that the model possesses discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant validity

	Consumer preferences	Mobile usage behaviour	Retail performance
Consumer preferences	0.81		
Mobile usage behaviour	0.80	0.86	
Retail performance	0.75	0.82	0.87

Tables 1 and 2 confirm the model's reliability and validity. Hence, the PLS-SEM model was suitable for further statistical analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

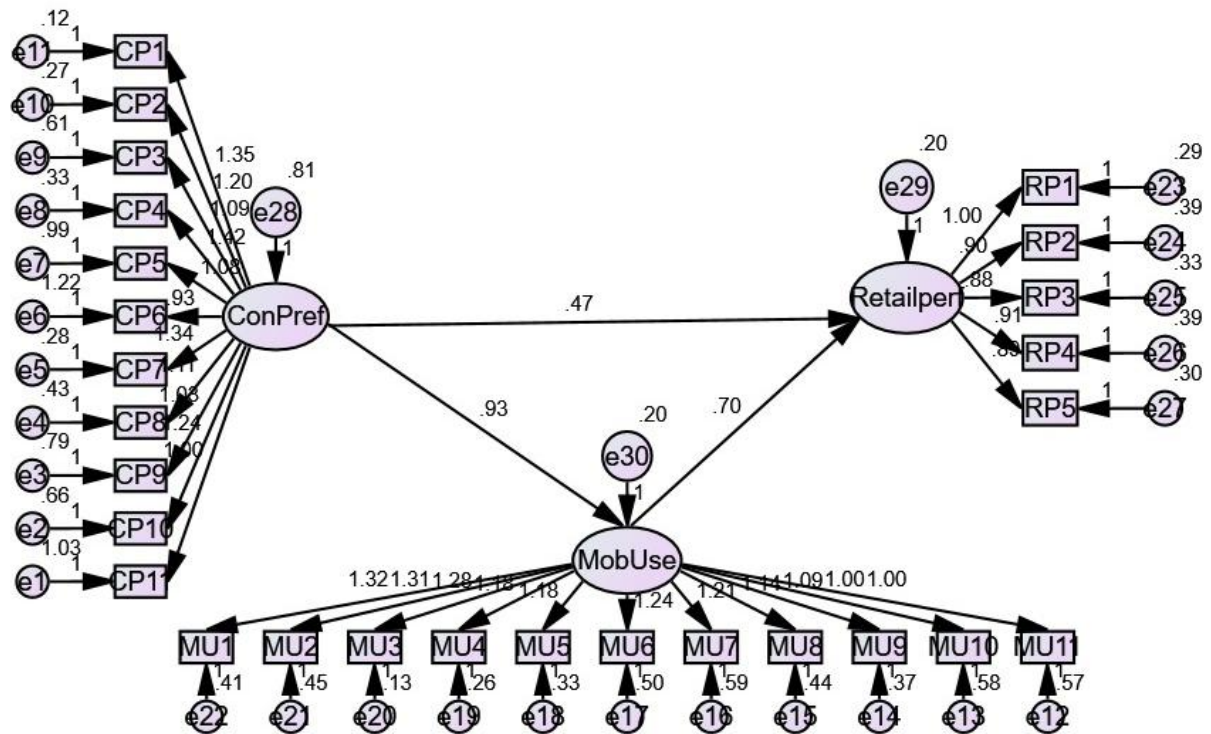


Figure 2: PLS-SEM model for retail performance

A constructed SEM model may not always be appropriate for determining the associations between variables, hence it is critical to evaluate the model's efficiency (Shi and Maydeu-Olivares, 2020). In the beginning, the fit indices for the original model were lower. To address this issue, modifications were made by constructing covariance links between error terms, resulting in the development of a redesigned model with a better overall fit.

Index	Value
Parsimonious Comparative Fit Index (PCFI)	0.67
Parsimonious Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)	0.54
Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.66
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.10
CMIN/DF	4.77
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.95
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.92
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.93

Table 4: Model fitness indices

Dash and Paul (2021) define an effective PLS-SEM model as one that achieves the following criteria: NFI, CFI, and TLI values greater than 0.9; CMIN/DF less than 5; RMSEA less than 0.10; and PCFI, PNFI, and PGFI greater than 0.5. In Table 3, all the criteria are satisfied except for RMSEA, which meets the threshold at exactly 0.10. Despite this, the model can still be deemed a good fit. Hence, it is appropriate to proceed with hypothesis testing to examine the relationships between the variables in question, given the model's overall adequacy. This enables hypothesis testing to examine the relationship between variables effectively and comprehensively.

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Result
Consumer preferences à Retail performance (H1)	0.59	0.08	7.80	0.00	Accepted
Consumer preferences à Mobile usage behaviour (H2)	0.89	0.08	10.76	0.00	Accepted
Mobile usage behaviour à Retail performance	0.74	0.07	10.10	0.00	Accepted

Table 5: Regression results

Table 4 shows that the standard error (S.E.) values for all links are less than 0.1, C.R. values surpass 1.96, and the p-value is 0.00, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. These findings lead to the rejection of the null hypotheses, which state that consumer preferences have no impact on retail performance (H1), consumer preferences have no effect on mobile usage behaviour (H2), and mobile usage behaviour has no effect on retail performance. Furthermore, the coefficient values highlight a positive correlation among the variables, namely consumer preferences and retail performance, consumer preferences and mobile usage behaviour, and mobile usage behaviour and retail performance, underlining the interconnectedness of these factors.

The table below illustrates the magnitude of both direct and indirect effects after successfully confirming the relationship between variables.

Mediating variable	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Mobile usage behaviour	Consumer preferences	Retail performance	1.24**	0.59**	0.66**

Table 6: Mediating effect (**P-value < 0.05)

Table 5 indicates that the null hypothesis, which suggests no mediating role of mobile usage behaviour between consumer preferences and retail performance, is rejected due to the significant p-value of the indirect effect. Although the direct effect is also significant, the indirect effect shows a slightly greater magnitude, and the combined effect is even stronger. This highlights the importance of mobile usage behaviour in influencing retail performance within the Delhi NCR region, emphasising its relevance in this context.

Conclusion

This study analyses how mobile usage behaviour influences the relationship between consumer preferences and retail performance in the Delhi-NCR food and beverage industry. To achieve this goal, the researchers tested three hypotheses. The first hypothesis was to explore whether consumer preferences affect retail performance in the food and beverage business. The results show a positive and significant association between these variables. One of the inferences that can be drawn from this finding is that consumer preferences for convenience, price, and quality affect the performance of retailers. For example, consumers' need for a diverse product line, fresh, high-quality food, and well-organised stores all lead to greater satisfaction and sales. This is consistent with prior research (Grewal and Roggeveen, 2020; Kullak, Baier and Woratschek, 2023), which emphasises the importance of understanding consumer preferences in improving retail performance. Therefore our findings suggest that to remain competitive in the market, food and beverage retailers in NCR must be dynamic in their approach and adapt their offerings to the continually changing consumer expectations.

The second hypothesis was to determine the impact of consumer preferences on mobile usage trends. Our findings confirmed the presence of a strong and positive relationship, ie. consumer preferences affect mobile usage trends for food and beverage products. Customer preferences have a significant impact on how people use mobile technology in retail settings. Our findings further indicated that users commonly utilise mobile devices to receive discounts, compare pricing, and redeem digital coupons. It can be surmised that there is a growing dependency on technology to enhance shopping experiences. This finding can be corroborated by secondary literature, i.e. the studies of Kaatz (2020) and Luceri et al. (2022) who found that the most common reason retail consumers choose digital tools to make purchases is their desire for convenience and efficiency, which are responsible for a smoother and more delightful shopping experience.

The third hypothesis studied the role of mobile usage in mediating consumer preferences and retail performance. The empirical examination of responses revealed that customer preferences have a direct impact, but the magnitude of the impact increases with the inclusion of mobile usage behaviour, i.e., the more these consumers use mobile phones, the more their preferences are likely to shape up and change the retail sector's performance. This demonstrates the growing importance of mobile technology as a significant driver in the retail industry. This is attributed to some recent digitalisation-related measures adopted by retailers such as tailoring recommendations with the help of artificial intelligence and machine learning, scanning QR codes, and using digital payment methods. Not only do they match consumer expectations, but also increase operational efficiency and customer loyalty. These results align with previous research by Riegger et al. (2021) and Ho et al. (2022), who found that mobile technology enhances personalised consumer engagement, ultimately improving retail performance.

Previous studies (Paul and Rosenbaum, 2020; Behl, Nigam and Vrontis, 2024) have identified several obstacles in identifying consumer preferences and their impact on retail performance. Some of these challenges include tracking consumers' ever-changing requirements and comprehending the intricate function of technology in influencing purchasing behaviour. However, earlier research has not offered a thorough empirical model that investigates the mediating role of mobile usage behaviour in the relationship between customer preferences and retail performance, particularly in the Delhi-NCR region. The PLS-SEM model utilised in this work conducts a thorough analysis of survey data, allowing for the investigation of mediating effects while also accounting for other key variables. This technique closes a major gap in past research by focussing on mobile usage behaviour, giving valuable information for food and beverage retailers seeking to react to emerging digital consumer trends and improve their performance in an ever-changing retail landscape.

Implications

To enhance food and beverage retail performance in Delhi-NCR, businesses should embrace digital transformation. One feasible alternative is to develop mobile apps that go beyond basic functionality, such as AI-powered personalised shopping recommendations based on user preferences and purchasing history. This can greatly increase engagement and consumer loyalty. Additionally, businesses should enhance in-store experiences by implementing mobile self-checkout devices and QR code scanning technologies. These systems deliver real-time product information and price, which reduces wait times and increases overall consumer satisfaction. Loyalty programs linked to mobile apps can also be tailored to reward frequent interactions, such as app payments or browsing, so increasing customer retention. Collaborating with food bloggers and influencers can increase exposure and promote app-exclusive deals or new goods, generating buzz for the company. Businesses can incorporate feedback mechanisms into their apps to better satisfy consumer demands and provide real-time information on consumer preferences. This allows for faster modifications to inventory and advertising initiatives. Finally, businesses must educate their staff about the benefits of mobile integration. Offering training sessions guarantees that personnel can assist consumers in using apps and digital capabilities, thereby enhancing the entire customer experience. Thus, adopting these methods enables organisations to be competitive and resilient in an increasingly digital retail landscape.

Limitations and scope for further study

While the study offers useful information, it does have certain limitations. First, because the findings are primarily focused on the Delhi-NCR region, their relevance to other regions or countries is limited. Second, while 363 consumers is an adequate sample size, it may not adequately reflect the demographic and behavioural characteristics of the greater community. This study only looked at the mediating influence of smartphone usage, ignoring the potential impact of emerging technologies such as AI-powered recommendation systems and augmented reality.

Future research could address these difficulties by broadening the geographical reach, allowing for cross-regional comparisons, and making the findings more generalisable. This larger approach would yield more specific information about the relationship between customer preferences, mobile usage, and retail performance across many markets. Furthermore, using a bigger and more diverse sample size may help capture a greater range of consumer behaviours and preferences, making the results more reliable and relevant. Future research may investigate the influence of future technologies such as AI-powered recommendations and augmented reality, which could provide a more complete picture of their impact on retail performance. A comparison analysis could help determine the efficacy of various technologies in enhancing consumer pleasure and operational efficiency, paving the way for more targeted advances in retail.

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