

Consumption Values and Millet Instant Food Choices: A Structured Model Assessing the Mediating Role of Attitude

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ABSTRACT

Millet has gained a lot of attention due to its nutritional, health, and environmental benefits; despite this, consumer adoption of millet-based convenience foods remains relatively low. Understanding the factors influencing consumers' food choices is essential for promoting the consumption of millets. In this study, we studied the role of consumer values and consumer attitude in millet food choice behavior towards instant millet products. The study also explores the mediating role of consumer attitude and the relationship between consumption value and millet food choice. Data were collected from 349 consumers in Bangalore, India, using a structured questionnaire through a convenience sampling technique, with KMO sampling adequacy (0.944) and Bartlett's sphericity test ($p = 0.000$). Data analysis was done using SPSS and AMOS, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling, and mediation analysis. The results show that consumer values significantly influence millet instant food choice and consumer attitude. Consumer attitude also has a significant influence on millet instant food choice. Further, mediation analysis shows that consumer attitude partially mediates the relationship between consumer values and millet instant food choice. The results suggest that consumers' values help to develop a positive attitude towards millet instant food products. The study provides useful implications for marketers and millet food producers in promoting nutritious and convenient millet-based food products.

Keywords: consumer value, consumer attitude, millet food choice..

INTRODUCTION

Dietary habits are rapidly changing due to urbanisation, increased consumption of processed food, and a link to chronic diseases. People adopting mindful and sustainable living have led to an increased demand for convenient, nutritious, and sustainable food products (Kenny et al.; Popkin & Ng). Millet, a golden grain, is increasing its popularity due to its health benefits, sustainability, and adaptability with changing consumer lifestyles (B.K. et al.). People's food choices are shifting towards more convenient and healthy foods, and they are ready to pay more for wholesome nutrition and are aware of their food choices. (Alsubhi et al.; Ilić et al.). India is one of the world's largest producers of millets, but it has experienced a sharp decrease in millet farming. To increase the consumption and awareness of millets, the government has taken initiatives. Nowadays, millet products are available as cereals, RTC, and RTE products. But consumer demand for millet products remains limited (Siroha & Bangar, 2024). Existing literature includes mainly information about millet consumption with perceived nutritional and environmental benefits (Shah et al., Exploring the Factors; Singh & Vemireddy).

However, research has largely focused on consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviour towards millets as cereals or traditional foods. The study of Consumption Values to explain consumers' choices of millet-based instant food products remains underexplored (Koay & Ngang; Shah et al., What Are the Drivers). Therefore, this study aims to understand the role of consumer values, with consumer attitude as a mediating effect, to examine the factors influencing consumers' choices of millet-based instant food products, thereby extending the understanding of value-driven food choice behavior within the emerging market for nutritious convenience foods

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND BACKGROUND

Increasing health concerns, the rise of lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity and diabetes, and environmental concerns have drastically influenced consumers' food choices. This has led to shift towards healthier and sustainable dietary alternatives, including millets (Shah et al., Opportunities and Challenges; Singh & Vemireddy; Siroha and Bangar).

Based on the nutritional and environmental benefits of millets, the Government of India has promoted millets' nutritional and environmental benefits, cultivation and consumption, contributing to the United Nations declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations [FAO]). India is continuing to face nutritional challenges despite such initiatives, reported in the Global Hunger Index 2025, a serious level of hunger (Amin et al.), which highlights the importance of nutritious, affordable and accessible alternatives. Accordingly, the food industry is growing its range of millet-based ready-to-cook (RTC), ready-to-eat (RTE), and other instant food products to meet consumer demand for nutritious convenience foods (Kumar et al.; Mazumder et al.; Mohanan et al.). The instant food market is also making remarkable growth and is projected to increase from approximately USD 200.5 billion in 2024 to USD 400.2 billion by 2034 (Emergen Research). Studies suggest that convenience, affordability, accessibility, and time-saving benefits are key drivers of instant food consumption (Janani & Nalini). At the same time, consumers are increasingly considering nutritional information and product origin when making food choices, indicating a growing preference for healthier convenience foods (Hartwell et al., 2019). Millet-based instant food products have the potential to satisfy this dual demand for nutrition and convenience because millets are nutrient-rich, environmentally sustainable, and suitable for diverse product development.

CONSUMER VALUES

Consumer values are important fundamental factors of consumer behavior and influence purchase decisions. The Theory of Consumption Values (TCV) has been widely applied to understand consumer perceptions and buying behaviour across various product categories, including food. Zhang et al. propose that consumers' buying decisions are influenced by consumer values such as functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values. Functional value reflects the perceived utility, quality, and nutritional benefits of a product; emotional value captures the affective responses associated with product consumption; social value relates to the social approval and status derived from product choice; epistemic value represents consumers' desire for novelty and knowledge; and conditional value reflects situational factors, such as convenience, promotions, and product availability. Collectively, these consumption values provide a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer decision-making and have been recognised as significant determinants of purchase behaviour (Zhang et al.). Sharma and Kushwah, in their systematic review of TCV literature, concluded that the consumption values remain one of the most important factors for explaining consumer buying behavior. Data show that the evidence further confirms that consumption values consistently help to predict consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions across product categories (Lin & Huang). Collectively, these studies help us to understand that consumption values play a major role in influencing the consumers' attitudes towards instant millet products and their purchase decisions.

Consumer Attitude

Attitude can either be positive or negative towards a product, which is considered to be an important factor in purchase decisions. Based on our literature review, it was found that consumption values shape consumer behavior and positive attitudes, helps in making buying choices among consumers. (Ahmed et al.; Aravindan et al.; Nystrand & Olsen; Wu & Lee). Factors shaping the consumer attitude towards millet food products are health consciousness, social influences, and awareness (Singh & Vemireddy). Akinmeye, in his research, says consumer acceptance depends on attitudes regarding health, naturalness, safety, and taste (Akinmeye et al.). Likewise, Ahmed et al. and Wu and Lee studies demonstrate that attitude acts as a mediating factor between consumer values and purchase intentions. According to a recent article by Ventura et al., consumer attitude, perception and consumer values shape the buying decision of food products. In his study, he suggested that labels positively influence the consumer preferences among the environmentalist consumers who pay a premium for sustainability attributes. Therefore, consumer attitude is considered as a mediator between

consumption values and millet food choice, whereby consumers' perceptions of product value impact their attitudes, which in turn shape their purchase decisions and food choice behaviour.

Relationship between consumer values, consumer attitude and choices

Recent studies have shown the role of consumption values in influencing consumer attitudes, purchase decisions, and food choice behavior. Mason et al., in their study through a meta-analysis of consumption value studies, confirm all variables of consumption values positively impact consumer behavior, with emotional value being a strong predictor. A systematic study by Sharma and Kushwah (2024) further reveals that consumption values are important determinants of consumer attitudes, purchase decisions, satisfaction, and adoption behaviour across diverse product categories. Within the food industry, studies suggest the importance of consumer values in influencing food choices. Chamoli et al. reported that consumer attitude acts as a mediating factor between consumption values and purchase decisions, supporting the consumer value–attitude–behaviour framework. Additionally, Truong et al. demonstrated that consumers evaluate food products based on multiple value variables before forming buying decisions.

Earlier studies confirm the role of consumer values in influencing attitudes and purchase behaviour across food and product categories. There are very few studies which explains the relationship between consumer values, attitudes, and millet food choice. Therefore, this study aims to understand the direct influence of consumer values on millet instant food choice and the mediating role of attitude between consumer values and instant millet food choice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the research gap identified, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How do consumer attitudes and consumer values influence millet instant food choices?

RQ2: Does consumer attitude mediate the relationship between consumption values and Millet instant food choice?

The objectives of this study include 1. To examine the direct impact of consumer values and consumer attitudes on millet instant food choice. 2. To analyse the mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Hence, this article tests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis Development

H1: Consumer values significantly impact millet instant food choice.

H2: Consumer values significantly impact consumer attitude toward millets instant food products.

H3: Consumer attitude significantly impacts millet instant food choice.

H4: Consumer attitude significantly mediates consumer values and millet instant food choice.

Ethical Concerns and Approval

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before participation in the survey. By proceeding with the survey, participants confirmed that they were 18 years of age or older and voluntarily consented to participate.

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. No personally identifiable information was collected.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the role of consumer values and consumer attitude in shaping millet instant food choice among consumers in Bengaluru, India. Data were collected from 349 respondents using a convenience sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was developed by adapting measurement items from established scales in the literature. The questionnaire comprised 19 items covering three constructs: consumer values, consumer attitude, and millet instant food choice. The items measuring consumer attitude were adapted from Ajzen, while the consumer values construct were adapted from Chakraborty and Dash and Shah. Items measuring millet food choice behaviour were adapted from First and Brozina. All items were measured using a

five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Measurement Validation

The measurement scales were subjected to a systematic testing process to establish their reliability and validity. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to examine the measurement of the items. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO value of 0.948 indicated excellent sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were considered, and items with factor loadings above 0.50 were retained, subject to theoretical considerations.

The internal consistency of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients were 0.937 for consumer values, 0.880 for consumer attitude, and 0.903 for millet instant food choice. All values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Following EFA, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS to assess the adequacy of the proposed three-construct measurement model. CFA was used to evaluate the factor loadings and overall model fit, as well as to establish convergent and discriminant validity. Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were examined to further assess construct reliability and convergent validity. The measurement model was evaluated using established fit indices, including the chi-square-to-degrees-of-freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), together with SRMR where appropriate.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the hypothesised relationships among consumer values, consumer attitude, and millet instant food choice. The structural model assessed the direct effects of consumer values on millet instant food choice, consumer values on consumer attitude, and consumer attitude on millet instant food choice.

The mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between consumer values and millet instant food choice was subsequently examined using a bootstrapping procedure. The indirect effect was assessed using 5,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. Mediation was considered statistically significant when the bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero. This approach provides a more robust assessment of indirect effects than relying solely on the

traditional causal-steps approach. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment

Structures (AMOS)

3. RESULTS

3.1 Respondent Profile and Data Screening

A total of 349 valid responses were included in the analysis. The dataset was first examined for completeness and potential data-quality issues. No missing observations were identified across the demographic variables or the measurement items, resulting in a final usable sample of 349 respondents. The demographic data of the respondents shows a diverse distribution across gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, and income categories. The gender of the respondents skews heavily towards females, with 50.1% compared to 48.1% males, while 1.7% of participants preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of age distribution, the most significant percentage of participants belonged to the 31–35 years age group (34.4%), followed by 26–30 years (20.1%), 36–40 years (20.1%), 18–25 years (13.8%), and above. With respect to educational qualifications, 34.7% of the participants were graduates; 33.8% were postgraduate degrees, 22.1% are 12th/PUC/diploma education, 6.9% held a doctoral degree, and 2.6% were educated up to the 10th standard. A significant number of the respondents were married (60.2%), and 39.8% were single. In terms of occupation, business professionals accounted for the largest share (21.8%), followed by retired individuals (19.2%), professionals (19.8%), employees (18.9%), homemakers (10.9%), and students (9.5%). In terms of monthly revenue, 30.4% of respondents reported earnings between ₹85,001 and ₹1,00,000, followed by 19.5% in the ₹50,001–₹85,000 and 19.8% in ₹1,00,001–₹1,50,000 categories. Also, 17.5% reported monthly income up to ₹50,000, 9.7% earned ₹1,50,001 and above, while 3.2% reported having no income. The sample suggests that there is a balanced demographic composition and contributes to the results of this research

3.2 Sample Adequacy and Descriptive Statistics

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was performed to check the data adequacy. The KMO value, which was 0.944, suggesting good sampling adequacy, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity value, which shows statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), hence indicating that the correlation matrix is significantly different from an identity matrix. Thus, the variables demonstrated sufficient interrelationships to proceed with factor analysis.

The explanatory descriptive analysis of the study variables The mean scores ranged between 3.3 and 3.8, which indicates positive behaviour towards instant millet products among the participants. Consumer Values ($M = 3.887$, $SD = 0.787$), Consumer Attitude ($M = 3.765$, $SD = 0.822$), and millet instant food choice ($M = 3.399$, $SD = 1.0185$). This suggests that purchase intention recorded the highest, while extrinsic attributes recorded the lowest. The skewness values are from -1.115 to -0.22 and kurtosis values are from -0.927 to 1.658 . Skewness and kurtosis values were in acceptable limits of

± 2 ; hence, the data are normally distributed and fit for SEM.

3.3 EFA statistics

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using principal component method with varimax rotation to examine the underlying factor structure of the 19-item questionnaire. The results suggest a three-factor structure corresponding to Consumer Values (CV), Consumer Attitude (AT), and Millet Instant Food Choice (MFC). The three extracted factors accounted for 68.213% of the common variance, with the factor solution demonstrating an interpretable structure consistent with the proposed theoretical constructs with factor loadings as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. The EFA findings therefore provide preliminary evidence for the factorial structure of the measurement instrument, which was subsequently subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Table 1. EFA Results

Component	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.948	52.359	52.359
2	1.741	9.166	61.525
3	1.271	6.688	68.213

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

Components	Symbol	Item Loadings	Items
Consumer Values	CV1	0.77	Millet Products have a health promoting effect
	CV2	0.76	Millet Products are free of harmful chemical residues
	CV3	0.759	Millet Products have high product safety.
	CV4	0.753	Millet Products are safer than conventional products.
	CV5	0.729	Millet Products do not pollute the environment.
	CV6	0.713	I would feel acceptable after buying Millet Products.
	CV7	0.692	I would impress the other people when I buy Millet Products.
	CV8	0.681	I would be provided social approval after buying Millet Products
Instant Millet Food choice	MFC1	0.819	I intend to buy instant millet products.
	MFC2	0.792	I buy instant millet products because of their sensory appeal (smell, appearance, and texture).
	MFC5	0.758	I buy instant millet products because they taste good.
	MFC3	0.732	I buy instant millet products when they are easily available in shops and supermarkets.
	MFC4	0.656	I buy instant millet products because of their long-term health benefits.
Consumer Attitude	AT1	0.781	It is good to buy instant millet food products.
	AT2	0.759	I think that purchasing instant millet food products is interesting.
	AT4	0.693	Buying instant millet food products determines quality of life.
	AT3	0.655	It is wise to buy instant millet food products.
	AT5	0.622	Consumption of instant millet products is below my status quo.
	AT6	0.534	I feel positive about buying instant millet food products.

CFA and SEM

The analysis was carried out in three stages, and the results are presented in this section. The results of CFA and SEM (Table 6) indicate that the proposed measurement and structural models have adequate fitness. Consumer Values (CV) has eight items, Consumer Attitude (AT) has six items, and Millet Food Choice (MFC) has five items. The CFA results suggest satisfactory model fit. The relationship between CV and MFC was tested using SEM (Figure 1) and results suggest that the model has good fit and that CV has a significant influence on MFC. The relationship between CV and AT was then tested using SEM (Figure 2), and the results show that CV has a significant influence on AT. The relationship between AT and MFC was tested using SEM (Figure 3), which

suggests a significant relationship between AT and MFC. As per standards p-value below 0.05 was considered to indicate a significant relationship.

Relationship among Consumer Values, Consumer Attitude and Millet Food Choice

The SEM results (Table 3) show that the full model has adequate fitness and supports the proposed relationships among CV(1), AT(3) and MFC(2) (Figure 4). The regression weight analysis shows that CV significantly influences AT ($p < 0.001$, CR = 13.307, SE = 0.054), while AT significantly influences MFC ($p < 0.001$, CR = 11.491, SE = 0.094). The direct relationship between CV and MFC was also significant in the individual SEM model ($p < 0.001$, CR = 11.029, SE = 0.076). The

regression weights for all three individual paths exceeded the critical value of 1.96, indicating significant relationships among the study variables. These results indicate that higher consumer values are associated with more favourable attitudes towards millet instant food products, while favourable consumer attitudes are associated with greater millet food choice. The mediation analysis is presented separately to examine the mediating role of consumer attitude. (Anderson et al.). Discriminant validity was performed using the HTMT ratio. The HTMT

values ranged from 0.711 to 0.805, and the highest value was between consumer values and consumer attitude (HTMT = 0.805). All HTMT values were within the recommended standard 0.85, which confirms the acceptability of the discriminant among the constructs

Table 3. Model Fit Results (CFA and SEM)

No .	Variable	CMIN	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	Composite Reliability	AVE
1	CV	1.89	0.977	0.955	0.983	0.992	0.992	0.987	0.051	0.932	0.632
2	MFC	1.955	0.998	0.966	0.998	0.999	0.999	0.989	0.052	0.896	0.634
3	AT	1.33	0.991	0.974	0.991	0.998	0.998	0.995	0.031	0.88	0.551
No .	Path	CMIN	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	CR	SE
4	CV → MFC	2.438	0.945	0.914	0.957	0.974	0.974	0.965	0.064	11.029	0.076
5	CV → AT	1.939	0.946	0.923	0.958	0.979	0.979	0.974	0.052	13.307	0.054
6	AT → MFC	2.459	0.955	0.921	0.961	0.976	0.976	0.965	0.065	11.491	0.094
7	CV → AT → MFC	2.363	0.916	0.888	0.931	0.959	0.958	0.95	0.063	—	—

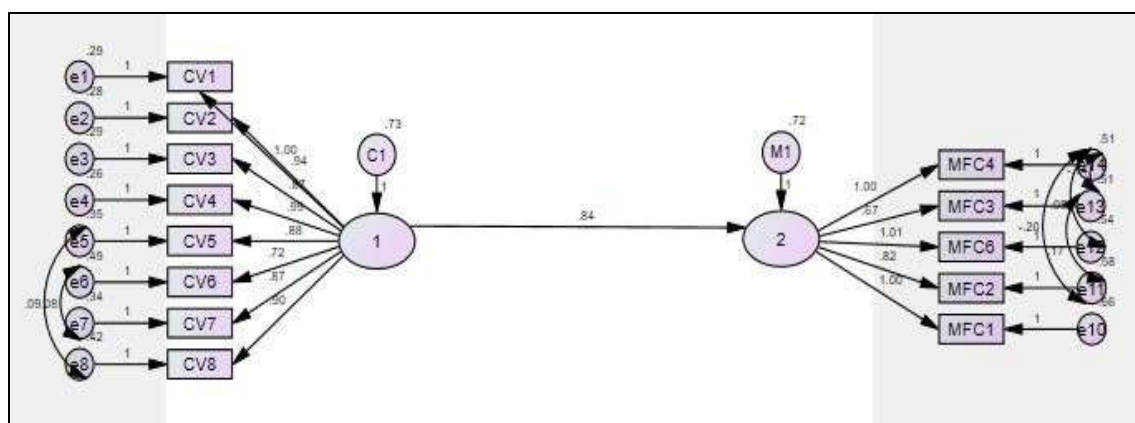


Figure 1. Relationship amid CV(1) and MFC(2)

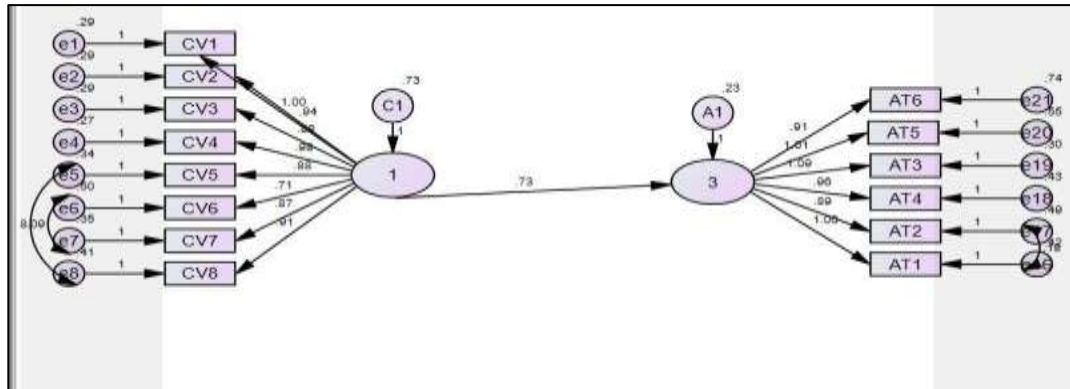


Figure 2. Relationship amid CV(1) and AT(2)

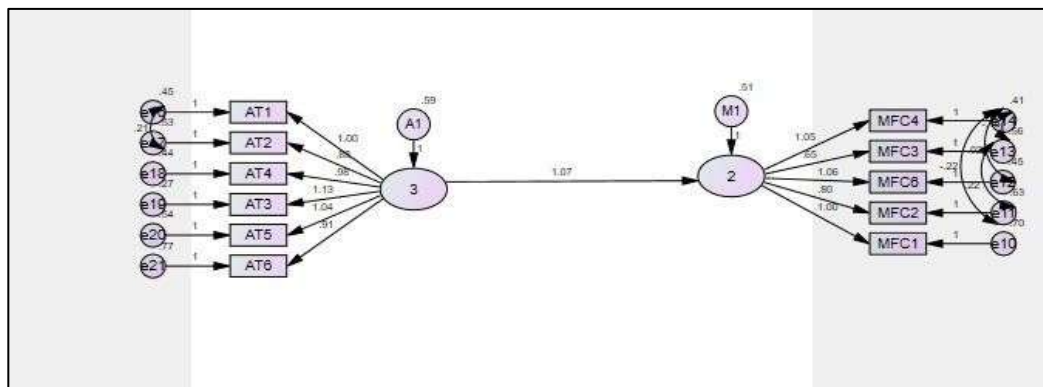


Figure 3. Relationship amid AT(3) and MFC(2)

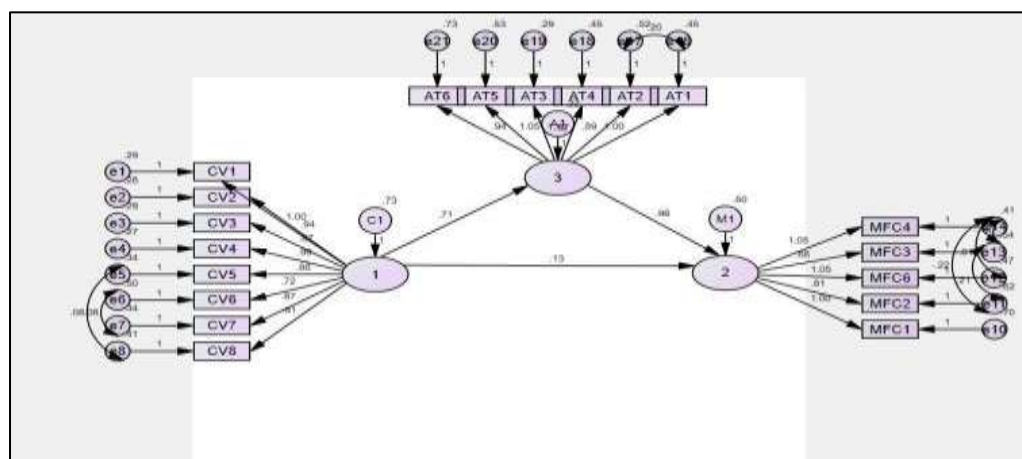


Figure 4. Relationship amid CV(1), AT(3) and MFC(2)

Mediation Analysis of AT in the Relationship between CV and MFC

TABLE 4 shows a significant positive relationship between CV and AT ($\beta = 0.7526$, $p < 0.001$), as well as a significant relationship between AT and MFC ($\beta = 0.5879$, $p < 0.001$). CV also demonstrated a significant direct association with MFC ($\beta = 0.3427$, $p < 0.001$); thus, H1, H2 and H3 are supported. Further, the indirect effect of CV on MFC through AT was positive and statistically significant (effect = 0.4424, BootSE = 0.0827, 95% CI [0.3008, 0.6265]), as the bootstrap confidence interval did

not include zero. Since the direct effect of CV on MFC remained statistically significant after the inclusion of AT, the results indicate partial mediation, thereby supporting H4. The hypothesised relationships and corresponding decisions are presented in Table 5 . Overall, the findings demonstrate that consumer values influence millet instant food choice both directly and indirectly through consumer attitude, highlighting the role of attitude in translating consumers' perceived values into food-choice behaviour

Table 4. Mediating Effects of AT in the Relationship between CV and MFC

Mediation path	Unstandardised β	SE	t	p-value	95% CI
CV $\rightarrow$ AT	0.7526	0.0379	19.8634	<0.001	[0.6780, 0.8271]
AT $\rightarrow$ MFC	0.5879	0.0737	7.9743	<0.001	[0.4429, 0.7329]
CV $\rightarrow$ MFC (direct effect)	0.3427	0.0761	4.505	<0.001	[0.1931, 0.4923]
CV $\rightarrow$ AT $\rightarrow$ MFC (indirect effect)	0.4424	0.0827			[0.3008, 0.6265]
Type of mediation Partial mediation					

Table 5. Hypothesised Relationships and Decisions

No.	Hypothesis	β / Effect	p-value	Decision
H1	Consumer values significantly positively influence millet instant food choice.	0.3427	<0.001	Supported
H2	Consumer values significantly positively influence consumer attitude.	0.7526	<0.001	Supported
H3	Consumer attitude significantly positively influences millet instant food choice.	0.5879	<0.001	Supported
H4	Consumer attitude mediates the relationship between consumer values and millet instant food choice.	0.4424	—	Supported

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The results suggest that consumer values and consumer attitude play a major role in millet instant food choice. Consumer values have a significant influence on millet instant food choice, indicating that consumers who perceive greater value in millet products are more likely to choose them. Consumer values also have a significant influence on consumer attitude. Further, consumer attitude has a significant influence on millet instant food choice. These findings show that consumers' perceptions of the value of millet instant food products can help develop a favourable attitude, which in turn supports their food choice.

The findings also show that consumer attitude partially mediates the relationship between consumer values and millet instant food choice. This suggests that consumer values influence food choice both directly and through consumer attitude. When consumers perceive millet instant food products as valuable, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards these products, which further increases their likelihood of choosing them.

The findings have practical implications for millet food producers and marketers. Since consumer values influence both attitude and food choice, companies should communicate the health, safety, environmental, sensory and convenience-related benefits of millet instant food products. Developing a positive consumer attitude is also important. Product quality, taste, attractive presentation, easy availability and clear product information can help create favourable attitudes towards millet instant food products.

The mediating role of attitude further suggests that simply communicating product benefits may not be sufficient to increase consumer choice. Marketers should also focus on creating positive consumer experiences and perceptions of millet instant food products. This can help convert perceived value into favourable attitudes and, ultimately, food choice.

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