International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, Management & Social Science (IJARCMSS)
(An International Quarterly Multidisciplinary Open Access Double Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Journal)
ISSN :2581-7930 (Online), Impact Factor (Cosmos): 7.270 & PIF (I2OR): 5.010, Volume 09, No. 03(II), July-September, 2026, pp 23-34

Beverage Consumer Preference and Conscious Consumption: Research on Adults

Ms. Anshika Mittal[1] | Dr. Nupur Gosain[2*] | Ms. Shambhavi Saxena[3] | Prof. N.K Chadha[4]

[1]School of Journalism and Mass Communication, IILM University, Gurugram.
[2]Department of Psychology, School of Open Learning, University of Delhi.
[3]Department of Psychology, Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, University of Delhi.
[4]Department of Psychology, University of Delhi.

[*]Corresponding Author: gosain.nupur1991@gmail.com

***Citation**: Mittal, A., Gosain, N., Saxena, S. & Chadha, N. (2026). Beverage Consumer Preference and Conscious Consumption: Research on Adults. International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, Management &Amp; Social Science, 09(03(II)), 23–34. https://doi.org/10.62823/IJARCMSS/9.3(II).9255*

Abstract

Beverage consumption is highly influenced by psychological, behavioral, and lifestyle-related factors beyond just physiological needs. Consumer preferences play an essential role in navigating beverage selection with choices through personal motives, conscious evaluations, and context-based influences. The study aimed to examine Conscious Beverage Consumption and Consumer Preferences Among Adults. It explores the differences across demographic variables like gender, age group, and occupational status. The study followed a quantitative cross-sectional research design, where data was collected using a self-developed survey comprising 26 items scored on a Likert scale. The sample collected was 172 participants within the study. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the characteristics of the data and response patterns, along with inferential statistics, including an independent samples T-test to examine the differences among gender and occupational status. On analyzing the participants, it indicated moderate to relatively high levels of preference driven beverage consumption. Based on independent T Test, a significant gender difference ($p < 0.05$) was observed, with females reporting a higher mean score than males. No statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found across occupational status and age groups, indicating no differences in conscious preference-based consumption. The study contributes to the understanding of preference-based consumer beverage behavior by integrating behavioral and psychological perspectives and offering implications for further research.

***Keywords**: Adults, Beverage Consumption, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Preference.*

Introduction

In recent years, cafe culture has advanced beyond simply just serving food and beverages to now becoming an important social, cultural, and lifestyle phenomenon. Cafés are now seen as social places where people get together to work, socialize, relax, and express their personal choices . Consumer demand for beverages has increased considerably , with customers aiming for not only high-quality drinks but also a variety of flavours, uniqueness, aesthetic appeal, attractive presentation, personalized service, and memorable experiences.

This evolution has influenced the way consumers interact with cafés and has contributed to the growth of specialty coffee shops and customized beverage experiences.

As cafe culture continues to evolve, beverage consumption has witnessed significant

changes in contemporary society. Beverages are now no longer consumed only for functional purposes, rather, they have become an important aspect of consumers' lifestyles and daily routines. The beverage market has extended significantly with the introduction of specialty coffee, artisanal teas, health-focused drinks, innovative beverage offerings, and customized beverage options that cater to diverse consumer preferences and requirements. Customers increasingly see beverages that offer quality, convenience, authenticity, and unique sensory experiences. A range of factors has influenced these changing consumption patterns, including urbanization, evolving lifestyles, increased disposable income, and greater exposure to global food and beverage trends. Online platforms have played a substantial role in shaping consumer interest in aesthetically appealing and specialized beverages by influencing purchasing preferences and facilitating the sharing of consumption experiences. Moreover, increasing awareness of health, wellness, sustainability, and responsible consumption has encouraged consumers to pay greater attention to product ingredients, sourcing practices, and nutritional value. As a result, beverage consumption has become a multifaceted activity that reflects not only functional needs but also personal values, lifestyle choices, and social influences.

Consumer psychology plays a big role in understanding beverage perceptions and purchasing decisions. Beverage choices are influenced not only by product characteristics such as quality, aroma, taste, and price but also by psychological, social, and environmental factors. Consumers often developed beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about beverages based on their previous interactions, marketing communications, brand image, social influences, and personal values.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) provides a useful framework for explaining beverage consumption behaviour. According to this theory, an individual's intention to engage in a particular behaviour is primarily influenced by their attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of beverage consumption, a favourable perception of a beverage, recommendations from friends and family, and the perceived accessibility of a product can strongly influence consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Another relevant perspective is Social Identity Theory, which suggests that individuals define themselves through their affiliation with social groups and often engage in behaviours that express their social identity. Within contemporary café culture, beverage consumption can serve as a form of self-expression and social status signaling. Consumers may choose beverages, café brands, or consumption experiences that align with their lifestyles, values, and aspirational social image. The growing demand for specialty coffee, premium beverages, and visually appealing drinks highlights the role of social identity in shaping consumer preferences and consumption behaviour. Additionally, sensory factors such as taste, aroma, presentation, packaging, and café ambience play an important role in shaping customers perceptions and interpretations of beverages.

Another relevant perspective is Social Identity Theory, which suggests that individuals define themselves through their affiliation with social groups and often engage in behaviours that express their social identity. Within contemporary café culture, beverage consumption can serve as a form of self-expression and social status signaling. Consumers may choose beverages, café brands, or consumption experiences that align with their lifestyles, values, and aspirational social image. The growing demand for specialty coffee, premium beverages, and visually appealing drinks highlights the role of social identity in shaping consumer preferences and consumption behaviour.

Additionally, sensory factors such as taste, aroma, presentation, packaging, and café ambience play an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions and evaluations of beverages. Psychological factors, together with social influences and personal values, significantly contribute to beverage choices, purchasing decisions, and overall consumption experiences. Examining these influences can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour and the growing demand for diverse and innovative beverage offerings.

Review of Literature

Consumer behaviour in the beverage industry has undertaken a substantial transformation in recent years as purchasing selection have become increasingly influenced by health consciousness, changing lifestyles, product quality, sensory experiences, and social influences. Traditionally, beverage choices were largely influenced by factors such as taste, price, and availability. Therefore , modern customers are more mindful of the nutritional value, functional

benefits, and overall quality of the beverages they use . As a result, researchers have dedicated considerable attention to understanding the psychological, social, and environmental factors that shape conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences. Present literature suggests that beverage consumption is a holistic behaviour determined by individual attitudes, health motivations, social norms, and experiential factors.

Health mindfulness has regularly emerged as one of the strongest determinants of consumer beverage preferences. Customers are becoming excessively aware of the relationship between dietary habits and long-term health, which encourages them to make more guided purchasing decisions. Alalwan (2025) reported that consumers' beverage choices are highly influenced by psychological evaluations, perceived value, and health awareness rather than merely product availability. This study suggested that customers are actively seeking beverages that align with their health goals and personal lifestyles. Similarly, Hallak et al. (2022) found that individuals with healthier eating habits and showcasing a greater willingness to pay premium prices for healthier beverage alternatives. Therefore, factors such as higher prices and limited availability acts as barriers, the findings showcased that health-oriented consumers are prioritising nutritional benefits over cost criteria . Likewise, Kowalska et al. (2024) concluded that health values, food habits, and perceived rewards significantly influence consumers' intentions to purchase functional beverages. Their findings emphasises that customers increasingly assess beverages based on their influence on overall well-being, highlighting the growing importance of health mindfulness in shaping purchasing behaviour.

Specific to a particular beverage like coffee has been in significant demand and plays a role in evolving cultural importance as well, due to which it has received extensive research attention in literature. Consumption of coffee is more closely relevant to productivity, lifestyle, and social interaction than just fulfilling the physical requirements as per previous studies. Amongst young adults (Lone et al., 2023), coffee consumption was found to improve concentration, increase energy, alertness, and other such reinforcing effects, playing a primary role in motivation for consuming coffee. Consuming coffee is not just based on the taste of the beverage, but also on the knowledge of its quality, origin, and production methods. Supporting factors like sensory characteristics, previous experiences, and product information influence preferences to consume coffee (Bressani et al., 2021). These studies support that sensory evaluations and cognitive perceptions increasingly shape any beverage consumption and choice-based behaviour.

Another important factor in conscious and choice-based consumption is the contemporary involvement that coffee shops or other such cafes provide for the consumers that intend to promote social interaction, relaxation, and lifestyle experiences. This has significantly increased the value of experience-based consumption within the beverage industry. Research by Morphitou et al. (2022) explains the relationship between cafe environments and consumer satisfaction, as factors like combinations of comfort, ambience, and social experiences contribute significantly showing that consumers seek experiences which are enjoyable and memorable with their beverage consumption satisfaction, encouraging repeated visits to a cafe and strengthening even emotional attachment to the cafes as well. To corroborate, another study done by Samoggia and Riedel (2018) identified factors like economic, product characteristics, personal preferences, socio-demographic variables, and context as major determinants of coffee purchasing behaviour. These studies highlight that beverage consumption is significantly influenced by the interplay of internal and external factors instead of a single determinant determining the decision-making process.

Social factors essentially play a role in affecting the choice-based beverage consumption. The dramatic surge in usage of digital platforms and influencer marketing has involved how consumers discover, identify, analyse, purchase, and attach emotional importance to beverages. Aljinani (2025) highlighted that social media substantially influences the perceptions and purchasing intentions of consumers towards beverages, specifically like matcha, by portraying it as a healthy beverage aligning to wellness-oriented lifestyles and similar patterns. Such influencer-promoted content shapes customers' perceptions towards choosing healthier, trendier, and more desirable beverages, suggesting that beverage choices and consumption are also shaped by social influences and digital platforms, in addition to the traditional marketing approaches.

Consumer psychology gives an essential foundation to understand such factors discussed above influencing the choice-based beverage consumption. For instance, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of

Planned Behaviour explains that the behavioural component of the individual is determined by subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioural control, making them an essential component of the theory. Any individual is more likely to engage in a specific behaviour when they showcase beneficial attitudes towards it, perceived social approval, and the belief of being able to perform that behaviour. In line with the current context of beverage industry, the theory proposes that the subjective norms, health beliefs, social influence, and personal attitudes interact with each other, leading to specific purchasing decisions.

Collectively, previous research shows that mindful beverage consumption is affected by a combination of health mindfulness, sensory experiences, lifestyle changes, social influences, and psychological factors. Customers increasingly analyse beverages based on their perceived health benefits, functional value, quality, and experiential attributes rather than relying only on the taste or price. Current literature has provided significant evidence regarding coffee consumption behaviour, functional beverage preferences, and health-oriented purchasing decisions. Therefore, most studies have emphasised on individual beverage categories or specific aspects of customer behaviour. Relatively fewer studies have analyzed these factors together within the broader context of mindful beverage consumption and customer choices. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by examining how health awareness, consumer preferences, and lifestyle factors jointly influence conscious beverage consumption among consumers.

Despite the existing literature, the following research gaps were found to be relevant:

There exists limited research on conscious beverage consumption as a comprehensive and holistic approach or concept, as if the existing studies are focusing on specific beverages like coffee, predominantly dairy beverages or carbonated drinks, or drinks like matcha.

The existing research has mainly investigated the individual factors like sensory attributes, media influence, and product quality, but very limited research examines how psychological and social lifestyle collectively influence the choice-driven behaviour.

One of the fastest-growing consumer populations in the beverage market is young adults, and very few studies focus on the approach of young adults as customers consuming beverages according to their preferences and choices. Most studies focus on coffee consumers, medical students, or specific consumer segments.

Much of the existing literature is from the Western nations like Europe, North America, and other international contexts. Very few studies have focused on this area within developing economies like India, where rapidly changing lifestyles and newer trends in relation to urbanisation and increasing health awareness are reshaping consumer experiences and preferences towards beverages.

Based on the analysed gaps from the review of literature, the following research questions are devised:

On what levels do the participants stand in consumer preference and conscious beverage consumption?

Does consumer preference and conscious beverage consumption significantly differ across various age groups, gender, and occupational status.

How are psychological and behavioural factors effect consumer beverage consumption choices

Results

The study aimed to investigate the consumer preferences and conscious beverage consumptions among people. The analyses contain descriptive statistics, means based analysis and inferential statistics- T Test Independent.

Descriptive Statistics

The data comprises 175 responses from Delhi NCR. Table 1 indicates the descriptive nature of the data including category-based variables like Gender (Male-Female), Age group (18-27; 28 and above), occupational status (student- working professional).

The data comprises 175 responses from Delhi NCR demarcated with demographic variables of age, gender and occupational role. Table 1 indicates the descriptive nature of the data

including category-based variables like Gender (Male-Female), Age group (18-27; 28 and above), occupational status (student- working professional).

According to the pie charts figure 1,2 and 3. Males comprise 54.1 % (n=79) of the total sample, whereas females comprised 45.9% (n=93) of the sample. Additionally, Age group wise data indicates 18-27 years as 54.7 % (n=94), and 28 and above as 45.3 % (n=78). Occupational status wise data included student sample as 50.6% (n=87) and working professional sample as 49.4% (n=85)

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 175)

Category	Group	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	93	54.
			1
			45.
	Male	79	9
Age Group	18-27 years	94	54.
			7
	28 and above	78	45.
			3
Occupational			50.

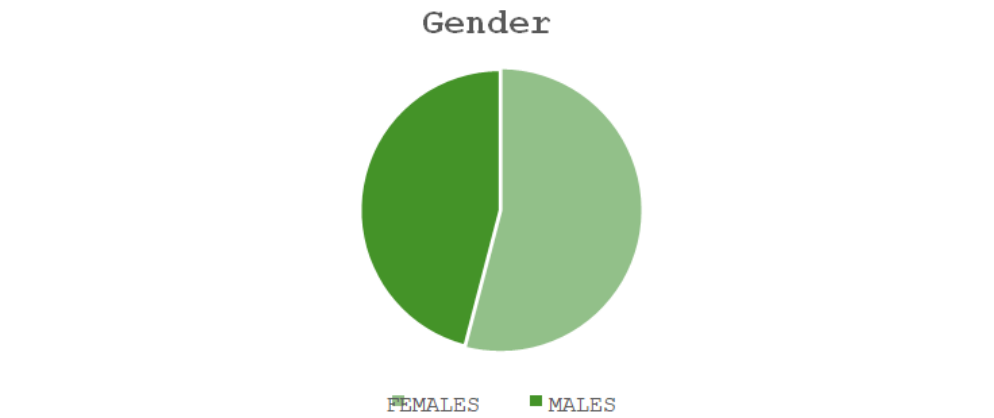

Figure 1: Gender distribution in the sample

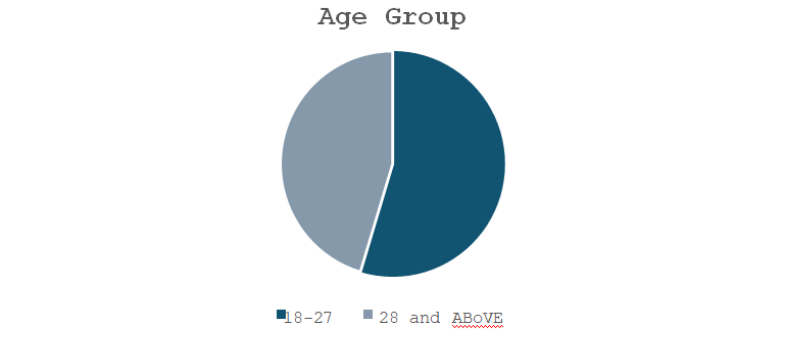

Figure 2: Age group distribution in the sample

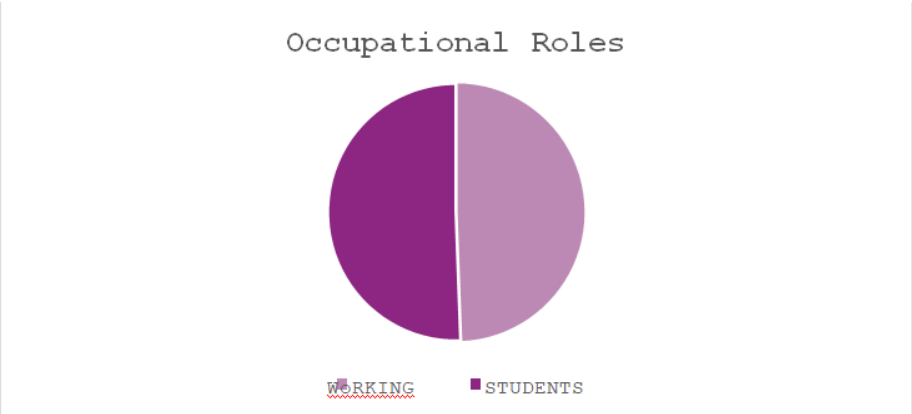

Figure 3: Occupational distribution in the sample

Inferential Statistics

Jamovi Statistical software used for computing intergroup differences among the three demographic variables of gender, age group, and occupational status.

Mean based comparison

Means were computed for each construct by calculating the average of responses at each rate on a five-point Likert scale, where a midpoint of 3.5 was used to determine the high and low levels of constructs. On comparing it was found that most of the participants scored in the lower to moderate range of the scale. The highest frequency of the participants (n=62) fell within the score interval of 2.84-3.22. The second highest concentration of participants (n = 41) was observed to fall between the 3.22-3.60 interval. About the extreme ends of the distribution, only 18 participants were observed to have scores below 2.84, which indicated relatively low levels of conscious directed beverage consumption and consumer preferences. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of participants obtained higher mean scores above 3.60-4.70, with frequencies of 11, 14, and 26 across intervals of upper score.

On the basis of figure 4, the distribution seems to be concentrated in the middle of the scale, suggesting predominantly moderate levels of conscious and preference-based consumption of beverage among respondents, with comparatively fewer respondents exhibiting extreme levels of conscious beverage consumption.

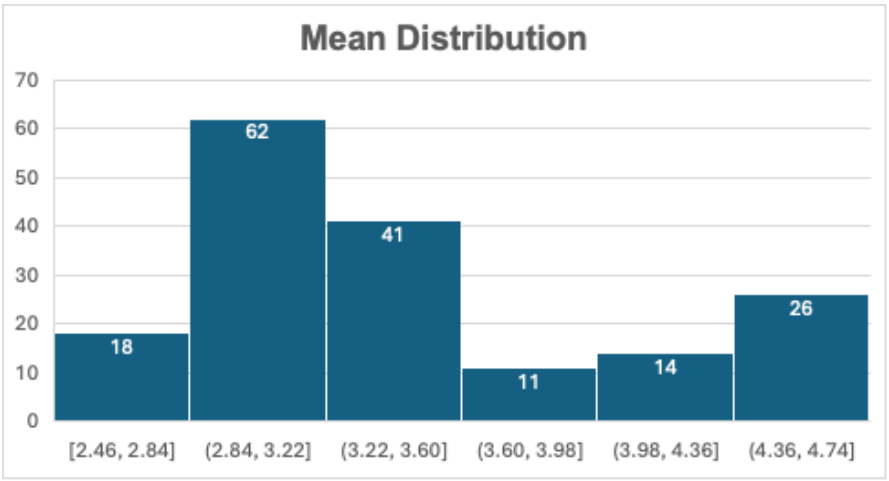

Figure 4: Mean distribution of the sample

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Above and Below Mean by overall based on Consumer preferences and beverage consumption

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Above Mean (> 3.00)	124	72.1%
Below Mean (< 3.00)	37	21.5%
At Mean (= 3.00)	11	6.4%
Total	172	100.0%

Table 2 illustrates the overall distribution of participants based on the midpoint of the mean score. From the total sample (N = 172), 124 participants (72.1%) scored above the midpoint, suggesting relatively higher levels of conscious beverage consumption and preference 37 participants (21.5%) scored below the midpoint indicating relatively lower levels of conscious beverage consumption, whereas 11 participants (6.4%) obtained a mean score exactly at the midpoint.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Above and Below Mean by Gender based on Consumer preferences and beverage consumption

Group	N	Above 3.00	Below 3.00	At 3.00	% Above
Female	93	70	18	5	75.3%
Male	79	59	19	1	74.7%

Table 3 presents the dispersion of participants according to whether their mean score was above, below, or equal to the midpoint (3.00) across gender. Amongst female respondents, 70 participants (75.3%) Received mean scores above the midpoint, demonstrating a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. In contrast, 18 participants (19.4%) scored below the midpoint, which suggests comparatively lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour, while 5 participants (5.4%) scored exactly at the midpoint, reflecting a moderate level of conscious beverage consumption and consumer preference behaviour. Similarly, among male respondents, 59 participants (74.7%) achieved mean scores above the midpoint, demonstrating a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. Meanwhile, 19 participants (24.1%) scored below the midpoint, which suggests lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour, and 1 participant (1.3%) scored exactly at the midpoint. Overall, the findings showcase that a majority of both female and male respondents obtained higher levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Above and Below Mean by Age group based on Consumer preferences and beverage consumption

Group	N	Above 3.00	Below 3.00	At 3.00	% Above
18–27	94	72	19	3	76.6%
28 and above	78	57	18	3	73.1%

Table 4 represents the dispersion of participants according to whether their mean score was above, below, or equal to the midpoint (3.00) across age groups. Amongst respondents aged 18–27 years, 72 participants (76.6%) demonstrated mean scores above the midpoint, showcasing a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. In comparison, 19 participants (20.2%) scored below the midpoint, which suggests lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and costumers preference behaviour, while 3 participants (3.2%) scored exactly at the midpoint, indicating a reasonable level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. Amongst participants aged 28 years and above, 57 participants (73.1%) demonstrated mean scores above the midpoint, showcasing a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. Additionally, 18 participants (23.1%) scored below the midpoint, suggests lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour, while 3 participants (3.8%) scored exactly at the midpoint. Overall, the majority of participants across both age groups illustrated higher levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents Above and Below Mean by occupational status based on Consumer preferences and beverage consumption

Group	N	Above 3.00	Below 3.00	At 3.00	% Above
Working	85	63	19	3	74.1%
Professional Student	87	66	18	3	75.9%

Table 5 shows the dispersion of participants according to whether their mean score was above, below, or equal to the midpoint (3.00) across occupational status. Among working professionals, 63 participants (74.1%) demonstrated mean scores above the midpoint, showcasing a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. In comparison , 19 participants (22.4%) scored below the midpoint, suggests lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour, while 3 participants (3.5%) scored exactly at the midpoint, representing a moderate level of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour. Similarly, among students, 66 participants (75.9%) demonstrated mean scores above the midpoint, showcasing a higher level of mindful beverage consumption and customer preference behaviour.

Meanwhile, 18 participants (20.7%) scored below the midpoint, suggests lower levels of mindful beverage consumption and costumers preference behaviour, and 3 participants (3.4%) scored exactly at the midpoint. Overall, the findings showcase that the majority of both students and working professionals indicated higher levels of mindful beverage consumption and customers preference behaviour.

Independent T Test

Independent T Test was computed to analyse intergroup differences among three major constructs. 95 percent confidence interval was taken.

As per Table 5,6 and 7, The results implied that the gender differences as computed under the independent t-test were statistically significant, as the values are $p<0.05$ ($p=0.04$). On the other hand, the t-test also implied that the differences in the age group and occupational status were not statistically significant, as all the values are $p > 0.05$ (age group-$p=.964$; Occupational Status-$p=.985$). The results imply that there are no significant differences amongst both age groups and occupational status groups between conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences. Moreover, Levene's test is significant ($p <.05$), indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances suggesting unequal variances between gender groups hence Welch's Independent test was computed which provides a more reliable estimate of group-based differences under heterogeneous nature of variances.

Table 6: Independent Samples T-Test Gender Based

	Statistic	df	p
Raw Student's t score	2.07[a]	170	.040
Welch's t	2.12	169	.036

Table 7: Independent Samples T-Test age group based

Test	Statistic (*t*)	df	*p*
Student's *t*	0.0448	170	.964
Welch's *t*	0.0449	166	.964

Note. H_a $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test occupational status based

Test	Statistic (t)	df	p
Student's t	-0.0194	170	.985
Welch's t	-0.0194	170	.985

Note. H_a $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$

Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences among people living in Delhi NCR. The sample was further demarcated on the basis of

demographic variables like gender, occupational status, and two age groups. A sample of 172 respondents was collected using a self-constructed survey over Google form. The data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential means. Descriptive base included pie charts and histogram along with means-based comparisons, and inferential statistics included independent sample t-test. The findings indicated that the majority of the sample fell within the range of moderate levels of conscious consumer preferences and beverage consumption.

On computing Independent t-test, the first hypothesis stating that here is no significant difference between conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences amongst males and female respondents is rejected as there is statistically significant difference found between the two groups- Males (M = 86.8, SD = 13.4) and Females (M = 91.8, SD = 17.3) as $p > 0.05$ ($p=.040$). On comparing means, Females show significantly higher means scores suggesting that they indulge in more conscious beverage consumption and preference than males. The possible reasoning can be being health conscious and having nutritional awareness leading to deliberate decision-making behaviour. Gender roles may have role to play, as women are associated with societal level expectations around wellness, and body image. Moreover, marketing also directs their "healthier functional beverages" to female consumers affecting their awareness and preference levels for such products. Existing research like (Osborne, 2008) females were found more likely to prefer healthier choices of beverages as compared to males, supporting the stance of females being more aware and conscious about making choice of beverages. Moreover, as per Krešić (2010), among females, sensory appeal (taste) and health related aspects are few of the highest ranked motives to make beverage preference and choices. The higher mean amongst females also suggests that women engage more in conscious, beverage consumption-driven behaviour than men. This can be supported by the framework of Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), as stronger conscious choices made can arise from favourable attitudes and higher consideration of behavioural consequences. Females may exhibit more conscious decision making in terms of beverage selection.

The second hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences between the two age groups, is accepted, as no statistically significant difference was found between respondents aged 18–27 years (M = 89.5, SD = 16.0) and those aged 28 years and above (M = 89.4, SD = 15.6), with $p > .05$ ($p =.964$). The mean scores of both groups were closely comparable, showcasing that age did not strongly influence conscious beverage consumption or customers choices amongst the participants. A potential interpretation for this finding is that customers between different age groups are increasingly influenced to similar beverage patterns with the help of social media, digital marketing, cafes, and online delivery platforms. Therefore, factors such as taste, convenience, health consciousness, product quality, and cafe experiences may have a greater impact on beverage choices than just age itself. Additionally , evolving consumer lifestyles have decreased the traditional differences in beverage choices across age groups, leading to similar consumption patterns. These findings of the present study are similar with those of Harsh et al. (2024), who observed no statistically significant relationship amongst the age and beverage preferences, indicating that customers between different age groups displayed similar beverage consumption behaviours. Similarly, Xue (2019) found no significant relationship amongst the age and coffee choices, signifying that age alone is not a key determinant of beverage choice. Additionally, Intentional behaviours and conscious choices are more influenced by the attitudes of individuals, perceived norms, and perceived behavioural control as explained under the theory of planned behaviour framework by Ajzen (1991) than by age demographic alone. On the contrary, Hallak et al. (2022) noted that younger consumers represent a greater willingness to pay a premium for healthy beverages than older adults. The younger consumers may have greater awareness regarding nutrition, diet and health, significantly influencing their purchasing behaviour. Hence, the findings of the present study supports previous research which indicates that mindful beverage consumption and customers choices are influenced more by individual's lifestyle, health concerns or awareness, and personal choices than by age.

The third hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference between conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences among students and working professionals, was accepted, as no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups ($p > .05$). The findings show that occupational status did not substantially influence mindful beverage consumption or customers choices amongst the respondents. A potential interpretation for this finding is that both

students and working professionals are frequently exposed to similar patterns through cafe's, social media , digital marketing and online food delivery patterns. Therefore , factors such as taste , convenience , health conscious , affordability, and lifestyle also might play a larger role in influential of beverage preferences than occupational status. As a result, both groups are expected to demonstrate similar beverage consumption patterns even though there is a difference between their routine and the responsibilities they have. The findings of the present study are consistent with that of Bryan et al. (2012) found that beverage consumption was more closely associated with factors such as mood, work, fatigue demands than with occupational category, revealing that situational and lifestyle factors have good influence on beverage preferences than whether it is a student or a working professional. Additionally, the findings of the study suggests that mindful beverage consumption and customers choices are shaped more by individual lifestyle , health ,awareness and personal choices than by their occupational status .

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) proposes that behaviour is navigated by intentions, which are formed through subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioural control. In this study, a significant proportion of participants have scored above the midpoint as per the mean-based analysis in the survey based on consumer preference and conscious beverage consumption, this suggests that the consumer preferences and choices are not just random or automatic, but they are significantly deliberate in nature. The items in the survey also reflected emotional motives, lifestyle expression, functional benefits, health perceptions, and conscious awareness of beverage choices evaluating the participants on the basis of personal evaluations and expected outcomes before choosing a beverage. Items like "I consciously select a beverage based on functional benefit", and "my choice reflects lifestyle and identity" are focusing on attitude towards the behaviour, whereas "I consider functional benefits before consuming", "I am consciously aware of why I choose certain beverages" are focusing on behavioural intentions and beliefs. Moreover, item like "I select a beverage in social settings to align with group preferences", which is suggestive of the subjective norms component of this theory. These components are in line with the theory of planned behaviour framework, where attitudes towards any stimuli (beverage in this case), combined with personal evaluations and perceived behavioural control over the stimuli (that is, beverage selection in this case), contribute to well-informed and intentional consumption behaviour. This shows that the survey captured the multiple psychosocial and cognitive determinants as proposed by the theoretical framework. On similar lines, the research Zoellner et al. (2012) highlighted how taste, health beliefs, convenience, availability, and cost majorly influence on beverage choices on individuals. This indicates that conscious behaviour, consumption, and consumer preference are shaped by intentional evaluation rather than just routine or environmental use.

The study by Samoggia and Riedel (2019) reported that beverage consumption in influenced by many behavioural and psychological motives instead of a single determinant. Habit, Pleasure, Socialization, and Health Perceptions with functional benefits being the key drivers of consumption, specifically coffee in their case, while product attributes like price, brand, and aroma also influenced the purchasing decisions of the consumers, aligning with the results of this study.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate conscious beverage consumption and consumer preferences among people living in Delhi NCR and exploring demographic differences based on gender, age group and occupational status. Results reported that overall participants shoed moderate to high levels of conscious and preference-based consumption of beverages. No significant differences were found amongst two age group and occupational status (working professionals and students) except gender, where females were seen to be indulged more in conscious choices and preferences .The findings were supported by relevant literature and theoretical framework. A study by Sharma & Shinde (2023) shows how 80.4% individuals (females -55.8% and males 44.3% of the sample; age group 20-30 and above) are moving towards healthier and non-carbonated beverages because of health awareness. This pattern reflects how consumption is more purposeful and more functional, and how individuals are focusing on conscious selection of beverages by making deliberate choices. Moreover, Hallak et al. (2022) highlighted that, motivational factors like food hedonism, eating goals, and food economizing came out to be stronger predictors of purchasing beverages which are characterised as healthy than demographic characteristics. This aids to

corroborate the present study emphasising on psychological factors of conscious beverage consumption instead of demographic variables like age group and or occupational status. Conscious beverage consumption and preference derived behaviours can be understood as be intentional behaviours being influenced by cognitive evaluations and attitudes along with social norms and perceptions, rather than only habitual behaviours. The implications of this study can even include how product manufacturers, and marketing teams, beverage outlets can tailor their products, pitches and services respectively around psychological motivations. the study opens a plethora of future research scope on the similar lines.

We acknowledge the limitations that this study holds. The study is only limited to the Delhi NCR region, hence contributing to the possible high homogeneity levels in the sample. The study's sample was arbitrary with less sample size, and non-probability (convenience) sampling along with administering self-report questionnaire giving room to social desirability bias, and response bias led to limited generalizability of the study's result.

Moreover, the cross-sectional design of the research limits the understanding of long-term consumer preference and behaviour understanding of beverage consumption.

The study opens a wide arena of research scope. Larger sample size with a more diverse population can be taken, cross culture comparisons can be drawn. A mixed method aspect can be brought in ,where qualitative methods can uncover the in-depth reasoning behind the consumer preference and beverage choices of consumption. Specifically, role of factors like social media, technology and AI can be understood how it is affecting the choice making behaviour among consumers. Longitudinal research can be incorporated as well to understand how demographic factors like age and income progressions play a role in affecting and evolving beverage choice-based behaviour.

References

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T
2. Alalwan, T. A. (2025). Consumer Psychology in Functional Beverages: From Nutritional Awareness to Habit Formation. Beverages, 11(5), 126. https://doi.org/10.3390/ beverages11050126
3. Aljinani, S. (2025). From Zen to Trend: Social Media Influencers in Matcha Beverage Promotion. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 396437670_From_Zen_to_ Trend_Social_Media_Influencers_in_Matcha_Beverage_Promotion
4. Bressani, A. P. P., Martinez, S. J., Batista, N. N., Simão, J. B. P., & Schwan, R. F. (2021). Into the minds of coffee consumers: Perception, preference, and impact of information in the sensory analysis of specialty coffee. Food Science and Technology, 41(Suppl. 2), 667–675. https://doi.org/10.1590/fst.30720
5. Bryan, J., Tuckey, M., Einöther, S. J., Garczarek, U., Garrick, A., & De Bruin, E. A. (2012). Relationships between tea and other beverage consumption to work performance and mood. Appetite, 58(1), 339–346. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2011.11.009
6. Hallak, R., Onur, I., & Lee, C. (2022). Consumer demand for healthy beverages in the hospitality industry: Examining willingness to pay a premium, and barriers to purchase. PLOS ONE, 17(5). NCBI. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal
7. Harsh, Pinkal, & v, J. (2024). A Study Of Consumer Preference Towards Cocktail & Mocktail
8. Consumption in Ahmedabad for Generation Z. Contemporary Journal of Applied Sciences, 2(8), 625–642. https://doi.org/10.55927/cjas.v2i8.12525
9. Kowalska, A., Leoniak, K. & Sołowiej, B.G. Consumers' attitudes and intentions toward functional beverages: a lesson for producers and retailers. Decision 51, 321–337 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40622-024-00395-y
10. Krešić, G., Herceg, Z., Lelas, V., & Jambrak, A.R. (2010). Consumers' behaviour and motives for selection of dairy beverages in Kvarner region: a pilot study. Mljekarstvo, 60, 50-58.

11. Lone, A., Alnawah, A. K., Hadadi, A. S., Alturkie, F. M., Aldreweesh, Y. A., & Alhedhod, A.T. (2023). Coffee Consumption Behavior in Young Adults: Exploring Motivations, Frequencies, and Reporting Adverse Effects and Withdrawal Symptoms. Psychology research and behavior management, 16, 3925–3937. https://doi.org/10.2147/ PRBM.S427867
12. Osborne, R. L., Ackley, B. D., & Giuliano, T. A. (2008). The “skinny” on coffee drinkers: Gender differences in healthy beverage choices. Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research, 13(4), 159–163. https://doi.org/10.24839/1089-4136.JN13.4.159
13. R Core Team (2025). R: A Language and environment for statistical computing. (Version 4.5) [Computer software]. Retrieved from https://cran.r-project.org. (R packages retrieved from CRAN snapshot 2025-05-25).
14. Samoggia, A., & Riedel, B. (2018). Coffee consumption and purchasing behavior review: Insights for further research. Appetite, 129(1), 70–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/ j.appet.2018.07.002
15. Samoggia, A., & Riedel, B. (2019). Consumers’ Perceptions of Coffee Health Benefits and Motives for Coffee Consumption and Purchasing. Nutrients, 11(3), 653. https://doi.org/ 10.3390/nu11030653
16. Sharma, A., & Shinde, B. (2023). Study of Customer’s Preference towards Carbonated/ Non-Carbonated Beverages in India. Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 19(4), 26–32. https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2023/v19i4435
17. The jamovi project (2025). jamovi. (Version 2.7) [Computer Software]. Retrieved from https://www.jamovi.org.
18. Xue, J. (2019). Study on relationship between age and coffee preference: Application to Specialty Coffee Association Brewing Control Chart. Pelita Perkebunan (Coffee and Cocoa Research Journal), 35(2), 131–139. https://doi.org/10.22302/ iccri.jur.pelitaperkebunan.v35i2.381
19. Zoellner, J., Krzeski, E., Harden, S., Cook, E., Allen, K., & Estabrooks, P. A. (2012).
20. Qualitative application of the theory of planned behavior to understand beverage consumption behaviors among adults. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 112(11), 1774–1784. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2012.06.368.

❑❑❑