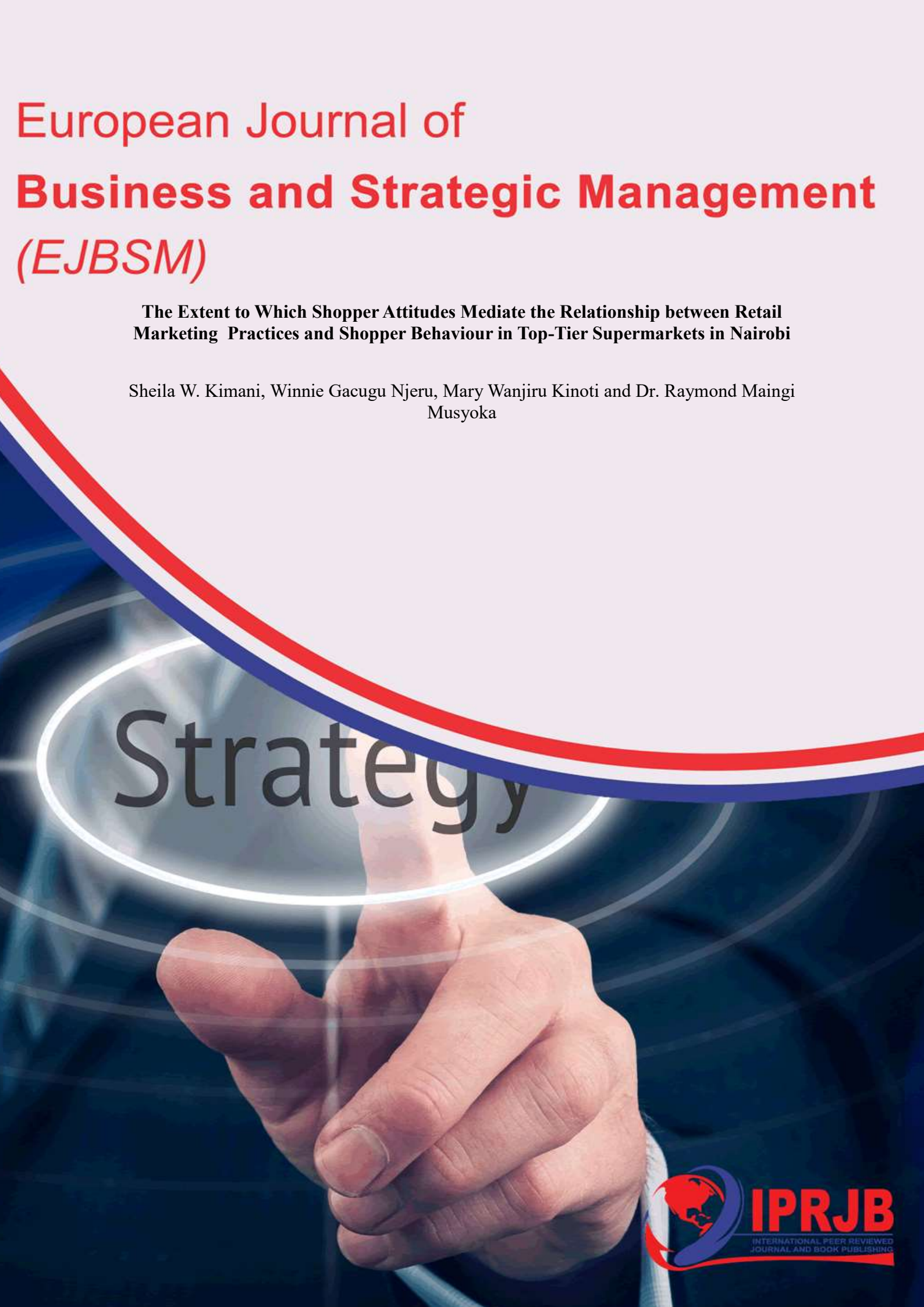


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The Extent to Which Shopper Attitudes Mediate the Relationship between Retail Marketing Practices and Shopper Behaviour in Top-Tier Supermarkets in Nairobi

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Strategy

The Extent to Which Shopper Attitudes Mediate the Relationship between Retail Marketing Practices and Shopper Behaviour in Top-Tier Supermarkets in Nairobi



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Abstract

Purpose: Retail differentiation hinges on effectively aligning a company's internal resources with the evolving psychology of shoppers. The ultimate aim for retailers is to accelerate sales. This involves utilizing retail marketing practices that optimize marketing efforts. The supermarket industry in Kenya faces significant rivalry from a vast number of formal and informal competitors. Supermarkets often fail to achieve sales goals because of a concentration on proprietary marketing that overlooks what shoppers feel, think and how they are likely to act. These challenges have prompted a conceptual shift exploring different pathways to minimizing the gap between attitudes, motivations, and behavior of shoppers. The specific purpose of the research is to investigate the extent to which shopper attitudes mediate the relationship between retail marketing practices, specifically transaction and relationship marketing and shopper behavior.

Methodology: A supermarket intercept using descriptive cross-sectional research is employed. Data were collected using the 5-point Likert scale from a sample of 372 randomly selected respondent were examined using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the aid of PROCESS macro (model 4)

Findings: The findings indicate that retail marketing orientations comprising transactional and relational approaches exhibit a significant relationship with shopper behavior. The findings reveal that Shopper Attitude partially mediates the impact of both marketing approaches. The study indicates that both approaches operate primarily through direct pathways; transaction marketing exerts a marginally higher direct and indirect mechanism, hence a higher total effect. Conclusively, tangible operational execution is the primary engine that drives consumer behavior far more effectively than abstract psychological states; however, it is intertwined with the necessity of fostering a positive psychological attitude among consumers as a secondary boost.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The findings support various theories including marketing exchange and consumer behavior, showing that retail marketing practices strongly influence shopper behavior through attitudes. Future research should adopt a longitudinal approach with a bidimensional view of attitudes. Moreover, while this study primarily focused on a general orientation towards supermarkets, it acknowledges that other factors within these environments also shape shopper behavior beyond mere attitudes. The implications of these findings are crucial for the retail sector and manufacturers. To maximise market share, a retail strategy must establish operational environments that foster long-term loyalty during the entire shopper decision process. By deliberately structuring marketing channels to complement these cognitive frames, supermarkets can transform psychological mindsets into predictable, highly profitable repeat purchasing behaviors.

Keywords: Retail Marketing Practices, Transaction Marketing, Relationship Marketing, Shopper Attitudes, Shopper Behavior

JEL Codes: M31, L81, D12, M10

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INTRODUCTION

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence and omnichannel strategies facilitate fluid interactions across digital and physical retail environments. This evolution is particularly crucial in a landscape with an abundance of comparable products and services. However, this has engendered intense global competition among market participants and the broader consumer goods industry, thereby eroding traditional strategic differentiators, exerting severe revenue volatility and escalating acquisition costs in the retail sector (Silou, 2025). To drive sales and fulfil buyers' expectations, Richter and Hanif (2023) portend that differentiation is necessary and, in the retail environment, entails aligning a company's internal resources with the psychology of consumers to bridge the gap between shoppers' attitudes and their actual purchasing decisions.

Supermarkets in Kenya exhibit structural characteristics akin to those found globally. These establishments are delineated into a three-tier system based on branch networks (Neven & Reardon, 2008) and are primarily engaged in the distribution of consumer-packaged goods and grocery products. Alongside other formal retail sectors, supermarkets generate an estimated \$4.62 billion per annum, contributing approximately 2.34% to 3% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This segment constitutes 30% of the retail industry and is the third-largest private sector employer in the country (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2026). While trading occurs mainly through traditional brick-and-mortar establishments, online shopping is gradually gaining a foothold despite still being in its nascent phase of development (UNCTAD, 2023). The supermarkets operate through a razor-thin margin of stability, currently navigating the third-highest competitive intensity index in Africa (Kearney Global Retail Development Index, 2022). Market data further emphasizes that formal supermarkets face fierce, fragmented rivalry from over 250,000 small traditional retail shops that dictate an astounding 77% of total market share (Boston Consulting Group, 2022).

Recent global market reviews estimate that the retail industry generated \$30 trillion to \$31.5 trillion in total sales and project that this figure will reach \$32.9 trillion by the end of 2026 (MarkNtel Advisors, 2026). The food and grocery segment is the largest component of the global retail market, generating approximately \$13.11 trillion annually (Fortune Business Insights, 2026). This makes retail a major contributor to national economies. Research on the global retail economy also highlights differences between developed and emerging markets (Rastogi, 2025). While studies in industrialized countries primarily examine automation and market saturation, studies in Africa and Latin America focus on the shift from informal retail structures to formalized supply chains.

Emerging markets, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, are becoming the focal point for modern retail marketing since this region is experiencing rapid urbanization and changing consumer behaviors, leading to fast-paced changes in the market. In these dynamic environments, the relationship between marketing strategies and business performance is intricate and largely shaped by local factors. To understand how these factors operate under pressure, researchers must look to sub-Saharan Africa's primary retail hubs. Nairobi is a key player in sub-Saharan Africa's formal retail sector, representing about 70% of Kenya's modern grocery market. Nairobi serves as an ideal empirical context for study; furthermore, it is a growing modern hub where formal corporate retail interacts with established informal networks, creating a complex landscape that requires adaptive marketing strategies for success (Deloitte & Planet Retail 2012).

Understanding market dynamics entails adopting marketing practices that fulfil shopper expectations. Sanbonmatsu et al. (2014) contend that one of the keys to achieving effective business management is a critical understanding of the multiple roles' shopper attitudes play in decision-making. Solomon and Russell (2024) emphasize that attitudes are a response to stimuli and significantly influence individuals' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Kinoti (2015) further elaborates that business survival is enhanced by addressing the factors that impede shoppers' purchasing decisions, which can only be comprehensively understood through attitudes. Specifically, it enables supermarkets to predict shopping preferences and influence purchasing patterns. Jeromo (2022) shows that attitudes are perceived as either appealing or undesirable, and in a supermarket environment, encompass the diverse reactions toward products, brands, services, and experiences that ultimately drive consumer behavior.

The supermarket is a significant retail distribution channel in Kenya and utilizes similar strategies across the industry despite selling undifferentiated goods, thus generating significant rivalry from a vast number of formal and informal outlets (The Boston Consulting Group, 2022). Because informal retail outlets leverage transaction and interaction marketing to attract and retain shoppers (Kimani et al., 2012), understanding shoppers' psychological mechanisms is necessary for leveraging supermarket practices for enhanced differentiation in a crowded marketplace.

Statement of the Problem

The expansion of supermarkets in Nairobi has not come without challenges, particularly due to the unpredictable nature of shoppers' behavior (Boston Consulting Group, 2022). Shoppers view supermarkets positively, appreciating their convenience for larger, less frequent purchases, such as household supplies. However, they do not view supermarkets as exclusive shopping destinations. They typically split their shopping outlets and prefer to buy fresh produce from smaller vendors, highlighting a disconnect between their positive attitudes towards supermarkets and their actual shopping behavior. This attitude-behavior gap suggests that, while consumers may favor supermarkets, this preference does not always translate into supermarket purchases. For retailers, understanding these market dynamics is crucial to crafting marketing strategies that drive sales. Shoppers' attitudes manifest as positive or negative evaluations, which in turn affect the responses of both sellers and buyers (Solomon, 2024). However, businesses worldwide fail to sustain sales because they overemphasize proprietary marketing strategies while neglecting consumers' perspectives. To address this issue, which remains relevant in consumer research, understanding shoppers' attitudes can help identify factors likely to impede sales and the fulfilment of shoppers' expectations (Munro et al., 2023).

Additionally, while marketing effort is known to directly influence consumer actions, there is a notable lack of empirical research examining the indirect effects, particularly how marketing efforts must alter consumer attitudes first to affect behaviors. In the Kenyan retail market, there is a significant gap in the execution and understanding of real-time in-store interventions.

A key issue is whether rational, practical considerations (utilitarian values) or emotional, sensory experiences (hedonic values) drive shopping decisions. Additionally, there is a notable lack of empirical research on how hedonic and utilitarian attitudes mediate the relationship between marketing strategies and shopper behavior. Retailers often implement supermarket tactics based on the incorrect assumption that these strategies affect all shoppers in the same

way, overlooking the role of individual psychological attitudes in shaping the effectiveness of their marketing efforts.

Without a comprehensive grasp of these processes, supermarkets risk misallocating resources towards ineffective marketing strategies. Misjudging what drives consumer choices can lead to ineffective product placements and promotions that do not connect with shoppers. This disconnect can result in stagnant conversion rates, wasted marketing resources, and diminished competitiveness in a fast-changing market where consumer preferences are constantly evolving. This study seeks to investigate the mediating role of shopper attitudes in the relationship between retail marketing practices and consumer behavior.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research is to investigate the relationship between retail marketing practices, shopper demographics, attitudes, and behavior in supermarkets in Nairobi, Kenya.

The research objectives were:

- i. Evaluate the mediating effect of shopper attitudes on the relationship between transaction marketing and shopper behavior.
- ii. Evaluate the mediating effect of shopper attitudes on the relationship between relationship marketing and shopper behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Review

Research into shopper attitudes has yielded significant empirical insights. Kraus's (1995) meta-analysis examined 88 separate studies which focused on whether there was a connection between attitudes and behaviour. Similarly, Kinoti and Kibeh (2015) studied how customer relationship marketing (CRM) impacts customer loyalty among 382 telecommunication subscribers in Kenya. Their study revealed that factors like trust, service quality, customer satisfaction, effective communication, and a strong brand image enhance attitude, leading to repeat purchases and relational long-term behaviours. These studies indicated that attitude is primarily viewed as a predictor of behaviour, emphasising its direct effect in this relationship. However, there is a notable gap in research regarding the role of attitude when considered as a mediating variable. This perspective warrants further exploration, as understanding attitude's mediating influence could provide deeper insights into the relationship between attitude and behaviour. The potential for attitude to serve as a third variable in this context presents an opportunity for future studies to enhance the theoretical framework surrounding behavioural predictions.

Watchravesringkan and Punyapiroje (2011) show the link between retail marketing practices and shopper behaviour. Their study involved shoppers in a few leading hypermarkets in Thailand. Data were collected using a shopper intercept. Shoppers displayed varying attitudes towards retail service, advertising and fair pricing. Respondents showed the same attitudes towards offerings and product quality.

Frymier and Nadler (2017) support these findings, indicating a direct link between internal assessments and actions. However, research by Fabrigar et al. (2020) challenged the viability of attitude as an impetus for the prediction of behaviour. Attitudes alone are not reliable predictors of behaviour, as decisions are shaped by complex cognitive factors. Several other studies challenged this simplicity, suggesting that people's conscious intentions often did not

match their actual behaviours. This highlights a gap between what people plan to do and what they achieve, presenting an opportunity for further exploration.

Research by Bülbül et al. (2009) indicated that the urge for pleasure weakened self-control and took precedence over practical considerations, leading to impulsive buying. This emotional pull can interfere with logical assessment, resulting in actions that do not align with long-term beliefs. Tzeng and Juang (2016) discovered that, to simplify the cognitive processes, hedonically oriented shoppers sought information through participatory platforms. On the other hand, utilitarian shoppers sought information based on beliefs, experience, social and cultural considerations, physical analysis and family referrals.

In their study on consumer preferences for milk packaging designs, Wambugu and Musyoka (2016) showed that functionality and aesthetic designs remained critical because they governed the appraisals, judgments, and eventual decision-making and although plastic containers were rated highest, broader shopper characteristics, specifically systemic price constraints, disrupted purchase. The findings highlight a gap in understanding whether attitudes towards shopping are fixed or changeable based on current circumstances. This variability in shopping behaviour suggests that further research is needed to explore how and why these attitudes shift. Understanding this dynamic could provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour.

Tauber's (1972) foundational research establishes that behavioural outcomes are continuously shaped by internal meta-traits, immediate frames of mind, and psychological temperaments. Similarly, studies by Hirschman et al. (1982) show that in consumer domains, shoppers' utilitarian or hedonic orientations influence shopping behaviour. This is also anchored in studies by Higgins (2000), which show that an individual's attitudinal motivation follows a dual-system approach. A promotion system is hedonic, focuses on pleasure and gain, whereas the prevention system is utilitarian, is cognitive and involves avoiding loss and negative outcomes. Takao et al. (2011) research shows that hedonism had a stronger influence on quality, customer loyalty and satisfaction and that utilitarian value is not significantly related to customer satisfaction. Existing research frequently neglects the dual nature of attitudes, which encompasses both practical needs and the pursuit of enjoyment. This oversight creates a significant gap in understanding how shoppers make decisions. Recognising this blend of motivations is essential for a more comprehensive view of consumer behaviour.

Various volatile factors influence the retail environment and consumer attitude and can disrupt consistent consumer attitudes. Simonetti et al. (2026) found that the changing atmospherics in supermarkets led to sudden shifts in attitude and behaviour due to real-time sensory experiences. Similarly, Dokcen et al. (2021) studied the mediating role of perceived service quality on the relationship between retail atmospherics and patronage of supermarkets; they found that retail patronage was influenced directly by retail atmospherics and indirectly through perceived service quality. However, Grønhøj et al. (2011) showed that immediate information can sway attitudes by circumventing cognitive fatigue. Schwartz's (2004) study found that when faced with too many options, shoppers experienced choice fatigue, which diminished their ability to evaluate their preferences thoughtfully. Foxall (2010) demonstrated that in a state of cognitive depletion, consumers often resorted to automatic responses to navigate immediate social, economic, and environmental challenges, rather than following their original intentions. The studies indicate a challenge in differentiating the effects of fatigue caused by shopping from the perceptions of tactics used by supermarkets. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to determine whether fatigue is a result of the shopping experience itself or influenced by the strategies employed by retailers. As a result, understanding consumer

behaviour in relation to shopping fatigue remains complex and requires further investigation. d improve customer relationships.

Hamilton & Thompson's (2007) study highlights the contrasting effects of indirect and direct experiences with products on consumer decision-making. Their research showed that when consumers encountered a product indirectly through advertisements or reviews, they tended to focus on its desirability. This heightened interest often led them to choose more complex products with many features. In contrast, when consumers had direct experience with a product, their attention shifted to its feasibility and usability. Notwithstanding the findings, the study was on music gadgets; however, because supermarket shopping is highly habitual, consumers rarely stand in the aisle reading long spec sheets or analysing complex features. Instead, they rely on fast, automatic, routine decision-making. The study by Hamilton et al. (2007) focused on music gadgets. Suggesting that similar research could be applied to supermarket settings remains largely unexplored, indicating a significant gap in current research that could provide valuable insights into consumer decision-making in retail environments.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

This study draws on the Marketing Theory of Exchange, which posits that marketing acts as a dynamic process of transferring value between parties for mutual benefit (Kotler, 1969). It relies heavily on a strategic alignment between a retailer's internal operations and the external psychological ecosystem of the consumer (Kotler et al., 2022). To comprehensively evaluate this exchange, this study operationalizes behavior and consumer behavior theories as well.

The marketing exchange theory is operationalized through marketing management. In the marketing context, marketing exchange encompasses deliberate strategic choices and customer service protocols, which represent the specific organizational inputs that the retailer injects into the marketplace to initiate the exchange process (Berman et al 2018). However, the Marketing Theory of Exchange has historically faced critiques for focusing too strictly on transactional mechanics while ignoring nuanced social and psychological dynamics. Marketing Theory of Exchange is the anchor theory which underscores the essential connection between internal management practices and the external market environment, demonstrating that a company cannot effectively provide value to external stakeholders without ensuring coherence and alignment within its internal operations (Baggozzi, 1975). However, critics argue that the rigid nature of marketing exchange models understates the chaotic, emotional social dynamics, which limits an understanding of the shopper (Asundi, 2015).

The study's independent variables are operationalised as retail marketing practices through transaction marketing and relationship marketing. In the context of marketing exchange, the four Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion serve as essential operational levers of Exchange Theory. Kotler et al. (2022) indicate that the product is identified as the primary means of delivering utility to consumers, acting as the reward in the exchange process. Price represents the financial cost incurred by the consumer, while place and promotion are designed to reduce transaction and search costs, respectively. A successful marketing exchange occurs when the total utility derived from the Product, Place, and Promotion exceeds the economic cost represented by Price, thereby fulfilling the core principle of Exchange Theory, which posits that rewards must surpass costs for a positive exchange to take place. Modern retailers use relationship marketing to enhance retention through: customer lock-in, personalisation, co-production, and database marketing, involving customers' participation in the creation of products or services (Hutt et al.,2024). Further, this collaborative approach fosters a sense of

ownership and loyalty among shoppers. Furthermore, by integrating these strategies, retailers not only improve customer satisfaction but also build long-term relationships that go beyond mere transactions. The combination creates a comprehensive framework that effectively addresses the evolving expectations of consumers and sustained business success.

To address this critique, this study introduced attitudes theory as a mediator, drawing heavily from behavioral theories. Attitudes represent the cognitive evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies that a shopper forms in response to retail inputs (Solomon et al. 2024). Similarly, Dockin et al. (2021) study emphasizes the importance of behavioral psychology in understanding retail practices, suggesting that they not only influence consumer actions but also need to change consumer attitudes to facilitate exchanges. However, the study shows the attitude-behavior gap has several limitations, noting that assessing a consumer's internal attitudes without a solid foundation can lead to weak predictions about behavior (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Most studies focus on direct relationships, examining how changes in retail practices affect sales or purchase intentions, while neglecting the psychological factors at play. This oversight leads to a phenomenon known as the Black Box Syndrome, where the consumer's thought processes remain unexamined (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). As a result, there is limited evidence on how retail practices influence the Attitude-Behavior Gap. This study aims to fill this gap by collecting primary data to analyze the roles of hedonic and utilitarian orientations, providing measurable insights into the cognitive processes that drive consumer behavior.

Behavioural theory is operationalized through shopper attitudes, the mediator comprising utilitarian and hedonic orientations and intention. In the context of marketing, value is divided into two main dimensions: utilitarian and hedonic. Utilitarian value refers to the practical and functional benefits that a rational consumer seeks to maximise efficiency (Solomon et al., 2024). On the other hand, hedonic value focuses on the emotional and experiential rewards that come from the exchange process. This study emphasizes that utility should not be viewed solely as a financial or functional measure. Instead, it presents utility as a multi-dimensional concept where both emotional satisfaction and practical benefits work together to shape a consumer's overall perception of value.

Consumer behavior theory represents the tangible culmination of the consumer decision-making process (Berman et al., 2018). Within the retail exchange paradigm, this behavior is the outcome measured through the emotions and actions of the shopper. The study operates consumer behavior through shopper behavior; this dependent variable comprises engagement, reciprocity, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. The model identifies shopper behavior as the key response, although the behavioral outcome remains unknown. The study examines this outcome through two periods: immediate purchase intention and long-term relationships, as outlined in the frameworks of McCarthy (1960) and Rowe & Barnes (1998). The study emphasizes a clear distinction between transactional inputs, relational inputs, and internal value perceptions. This separation is crucial for empirical design, allowing research to explore how these factors influence shopper behavior. The ultimate goal of the research is to uncover the final behavioral response. The study tested the following hypotheses:

H_{01a}: Transaction marketing practices have no significant direct effect on shopper behaviour.

H_{02a}: Transaction marketing practices have no significant effect on shopper attitudes.

H_{03a}: Shopper attitudes have no significant effect on shopper behaviour within the transaction marketing model.

H_{04a}: Shopper attitudes have no significant mediating effect on the relationship between transaction marketing practices and shopper behaviour.

H_{01 b}: Relationship marketing practices have no significant direct effect on shopper behaviour.

H_{02 b}: Relationship marketing practices have no significant effect on shopper attitudes.

H_{03b}: Shopper attitudes have no significant mediating effect on the relationship between transaction marketing practices and shopper behaviour.

H_{04 b}: Shopper attitudes have no significant mediating effect on the relationship between relationship marketing practices and shopper behaviour.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, retail marketing practices are defined as a multi-dimensional construct combining both transaction and relationship marketing practices. The study presents hypotheses as follows:

Conceptual Framework

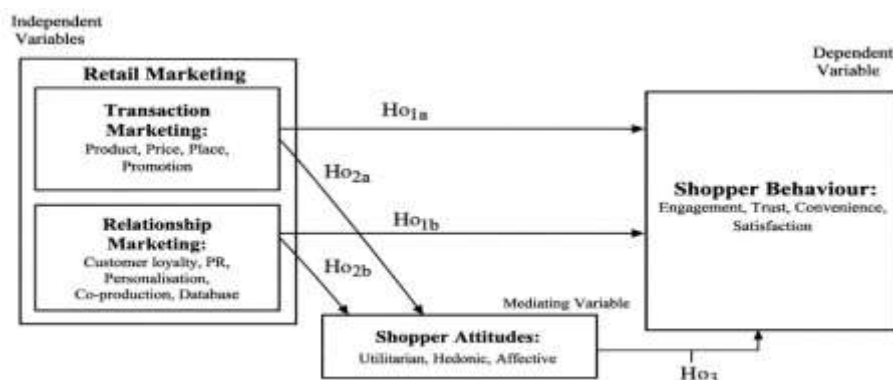


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a positivist philosophical framework. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of shopper attitudes in the relationship between retail marketing practices and shopper behavior within the supermarket industry. To achieve this, a descriptive cross-sectional survey approach was deployed to test the hypothesized conceptual framework recommended by Saunders et al. (2023). The population for this study consisted of shoppers visiting tier one supermarkets in Nairobi. A total of 400 respondents were recruited using a probability sampling technique after shopping in tier one supermarkets in Nairobi, which are supermarket chains having at least 10 branches.

Measurement Variables

Retail marketing practices, the independent variable, comprises transaction marketing, with a focus on McCarthy's (1960) marketing mix: promotion, place, price, and product and Rowe and Barnes (1998) relationship marketing framework for competitive advantage, which includes customer lock-in, personalization, co-production and database, which are premised on

nurturing connections to maximise overall lifetime value and customer retention, comprising the independent variable. Additionally, shopper behavior refers to the actions and emotional reactions triggered by retailers' marketing strategies, comprising engagement, trust, reciprocity, commitment, and satisfaction (Hutt et al. 2024). Shopper attitude, the mediator, is represented by utilitarian, hedonic and intention (Hirschman et al., 1982).

Measures and Operationalization

The study measured the dependent variable, shopper behavior (SB), using a 10-item scale adapted directly from the framework established by Wilson (1995). To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of shopper outcomes, the scale intentionally integrates both affective(emotional) dimensions such as trust and satisfaction and active behavioral dimensions including engagement, reciprocity, and commitment. This systematic approach captures the holistic nature of shopper response outcomes within the exchanges, allowing for a precise evaluation of how distinct marketing inputs influence unified consumer behavior.

Measurement Reliability and Validity

Before hypothesis testing, the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instruments were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α) as shown in Table 1. All four principal latent constructs demonstrated excellent internal reliability, far exceeding the standard psychometric threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Specifically, Transaction Marketing (12 items) yielded an α of .941; Relationship Marketing (12 items) yielded an α of .917; Shopper Attitude (6 items) yielded an α of .915; and the composite shopper behavior scale (10 items) exhibited an exceptionally strong α of .926. The high internal consistency of the shopper behavior scale empirically validates the aggregation of its emotional and behavioral sub-facets into a singular, highly cohesive consumer outcome construct.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Test

Construct	Items	Cronbach Alpha α	Number of
		α Rating	items
Transaction Marketing (TM)	Promotion Place Price Products.	.941	12
Relationship Marketing (RM)	Customer lock-in Personalization Co-production Database	.917	12
Shopper Attitude (SA)	Utilitarian Hedonic Intention	.915	6
Shopper Behaviour (SB)	Engagement Trust Reciprocity Commitment Satisfaction	.926	10

Source: Primary Data, 2025

To ensure construct validity, all measurement items were adapted from established marketing literature and measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from scale ranging from strongly disagree 1 (strongly disagree) to 5(stongly agree) for retail marketing practices, shopper

attitude and behavior. The study conducted a pilot study with 40 respondents in the adjacent county of Kiambu was conducted on 40 respondents to evaluate questionnaire clarity and item reliability before full deployment. Data collection took place in March 2025. Cronbach's alpha and were calculated to assess internal consistency. Variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to verify convergent validity.

RESULTS

Preliminary Findings

Data screening was conducted to eliminate incomplete or careless responses, resulting in a final usable sample of 372 participants, with a 93% response rate. The sample profile consisted of 205 (55.1 %) females and 167 (44.9%) male participants, with the majority falling into the 29-39 age bracket.

Data analysis involves the application of descriptive and inferential statistics and, finally, hypothesis testing. The standard deviation (SD) measures the extent of variation among the responses, based on how the data cluster around the mean. Collectively, the Mean and the Coefficient of variation (CV) provide a standardized system for comparing different datasets (Coppers et al., 2011). Multiple regression analysis is also conducted.

Descriptive Analysis

The analysis of descriptive statistics for retail marketing practices was conducted. Place emerged as the most critical element, garnering the highest consensus among respondents ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.82$, $CV = 20\%$). Following closely was product, which received a slightly lower mean score ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.84$, $CV = 21\%$), suggesting generally strong agreement. Price ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.92$, $CV = 25\%$) was viewed with high consensus and moderate spread, indicating some polarised shoppers. Promotion ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.08$, $CV = 30\%$). Exhibited high consensus and high spread, indicating the majority agreed with notable clusters of dissent, culminating in the lowest score. Under Malhotra's (2020) framework, a CV of 30% flags severe relative dispersion. This statistical profile implies that shoppers value operational elements like place. However, Promotion is heavily fractured. This variability points to considerable disagreement among respondents within the marketing mix.

Descriptive statistics for shopper attitudes on respondents' utilitarian, hedonic and likely intentions towards shopping in supermarkets. The structured interpretation of Likert scales, outlined by Malhotra (2020), is used to interpret data. The analysis shows Intention ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.78$, $CV = 19\%$) was regarded as the most critical element, garnering the highest consensus with the least spread, followed by utilitarian ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.89$, $CV = 24\%$). Both are indicative of the respondent's general agreement. On the other hand, hedonic ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.15$, $CV = 33\%$) show high consensus and low spread, which (Malhotra 2019) recommends ought to be flagged for severe relative dispersion.

The results are indicative of a lack of genuine uniformity, a lack of preference and psychological ambivalence from two passionate, opposing stances. The stronger preference for goal-focused shopping over entertainment indicates a prevention-oriented approach among many shoppers. This has marketing implications, supporting Zhang et al. (2010) that prevention-oriented shoppers respond differently, notably trusting negative reviews more than positive ones. Attitude, intention, and motivation drive actions leading to utilitarian or hedonic outcomes, with intention preceding these orientations (Scarpi, 2020). The context of repeat purchases and social or peer pressure (Solomon, 2017) may explain these results, consistent

with MacLeod (2014), who noted that attitude components persist, change, or fade when no longer

Descriptive statistics for shopper behaviour were run to highlight respondents' actions and emotions in supermarkets. The structured interpretation of Likert scales, outlined by Malhotra (2020), is used to interpret data. Descriptive statistics were calculated to evaluate the perceived importance of components of shopping behaviour among the participants ($N = 372$). Mean (M) scores on the 1-to-5 Likert scale indicated that average scores were:- Reciprocity was rated as the most critical factor ($M = 4.115$, $SD = 0.623$), followed closely by Satisfaction ($M = 33.78$, $SD = 0.654$), Trust ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.73$), Commitment ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.09$) and engagement ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.08$). Relative variability, assessed via the Coefficient of Variation (CV), revealed that the average participant consensus was strongest for Reciprocity (17%) and weakest for Engagement (CV = 36.5%).

Correlation Analysis

Analyses shows when transaction marketing practices are the baseline, shopper behaviour ($r = .51$, $p < .01$) and shopper attitudes ($r = .61$, $p < .01$) both have a moderate positive correlation. These findings highlight the effectiveness of baseline transaction marketing practices, evident in the moderate correlation with shopper attitudes. However, a lower correlation with shopper behavior indicates an attitude-behavior gap. Secondly, when relationship marketing is the baseline, the results show shopper behavior ($r = .5$, $p < .01$) and shopper attitudes ($r = .46$) both have moderate positive correlations. This implies that relationship marketing practices affect shopper behavior both directly and indirectly through shopping attitudes.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Regression Analysis. To evaluate the underlying transmission mechanisms, mediation analysis was conducted following the framework established by Hayes (2022). Within this model, the direct effect captures the immediate, unmediated impact of retail marketing practices on the shopper behavioral outcome, bypassing the specified mediator. Conversely, the indirect effect quantifies the internal cognitive or affective processing mechanisms before arriving at a final purchase outcome.

Transaction Marketing Practices and Shopper Behavior Mediated by Shopper Attitude

The latter includes utilitarian and hedonic orientations and intentions

Mediation regression analysis to show how one variable explains the relationship between other variables (Hayes, 2022). Regression was run to establish the shopper attitudes on the relationship between retail marketing practices and shopper behaviour. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Transaction Marketing Practices and Shopper Behavior Mediated by Shopper Attitude

Model Summary (Step 1)								
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F(HC ₀)	df1	df2	p
1	0.61	0.38	0.37	0.22	197.31	1	370	0.0000
Outcome Variable: SA								
Coefficients								
Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	95% CI (LLCI, ULCI)		
Constant	0.98	0.20		4.84	0.0000	(0.58, 1.37)		
TM	0.73	0.05	0.51	14.05	0.0000	(0.62, 0.82)		
Model Summary (Step 2)								
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F(HC ₀)	df1	df2	p
1	0.55	0.30	0.30	0.11	50.00	2	369	0.0000
Outcome Variable: SB								
Coefficients								
Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	CI (LCI, ULCI)		
Constant	1.82	0.18		10.21	0.0000	(1.45, 2.17)		
TM	0.27	0.05	0.19	5.10	0.0000	(0.16, 0.37)		
SA	0.19	0.04	0.15	4.31	0.0000	(0.10, 0.28)		
Direct Effect of X on Y								
Effect	Std. Error	T	p	CI (LLCI, ULCI)				
0.27	0.05	5.10	0.0000	(0.16, 0.37)				
Indirect Effects of X on Y								
Effect	BootSE		BootLLCI		BootULCI			
SA	0.14		0.08		0.21			

Source: Primary Data 2025.

The results indicated that transaction marketing had a significant positive effect on shopper attitude (Path *a*: $b = .73$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 14.05$, $p < .001$). In turn, shopper attitude had a significant positive effect on shopper behavior while controlling for Transaction Marketing (Path *b*: $b = .19$, $SE = 0.04$, $t = 4.31$, $p < .001$).

The indirect effect of transaction marketing on shopper behavior through shopper attitude was statistically significant (Path; $ab = .14$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.21]), as the bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero. When shopper attitude was included in the model, the direct effect of transaction marketing on shopper behavior remained statistically significant (Path *c'*: $b = .27$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 5.10$, $p < .001$).

Because both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant, the results support a partial mediation framework. The total effect of transaction marketing on shopper behavior was .41 ($c = .27 + .14$). The direct effect is approximately 66% ($.27/.41$), and the indirect effect is approximately 34. % ($.14 / .41$). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, concluding that shopper attitude partially mediates the relationship between transaction marketing and shopper behavior.

The resulting fitted regression equation establishes the influence of two variables, transaction marketing and shopper attitude, on shopper behaviour and is summarised as follows. Step 1: $Y_{SA} = 0.98 + 0.73 (TM)$ indicates that for every 1 unit increase in transaction marketing, shopper attitude is expected to increase by 0.75 units. Step 2: $sb = 1.82 + .27 (tm) + 0.19(sa)$ shows that for every 1 unit increase in tm, y_{sb} is expected to increase by 0.27 units, while keeping shopper attitudes a constant. Further, for every one-unit increase in shopper attitude, shopper behaviour is predicted to increase by 0.19 units, holding transaction marketing constant.

Relationship Marketing Practices and Shopper Behaviour Mediated by Shopper Attitude. The Latter Includes Utilitarian and Hedonic Orientations and Intentions

Hayes (2017) supports a mediation regression analysis to show how one variable explains the relationship between variables. A regression was run to establish the fact. The results of which are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship Marketing Practices and Shopper Behaviour Mediated by Shopper Attitude

Model Summary (Step 1)						
R	R ²	MSE	F(HCo)	df1	df2	p
0.4581	0.21	0.23	108.07	1	370	0.000
Outcome Variable: SA						
Coefficients						
Predictor	coeff	se(HCo)	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.21	0.16	14.24	0.000	1.91	2.52
RM	0.47	0.05	10.40	0.000	0.38	0.56
Model Summary (Step 2)						
R	R ²	MSE	F(HCo)	df1	df2	p
0.5765	0.33	0.10	90.60	2	369	0.000
Outcome Variable: SB						
Coefficients						
Predictor	Coeff	se(HCo)	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.92	0.14	14.40	0.000	1.66	2.19
RM	0.24	0.03	7.34	0.000	0.18	0.30
SA	0.22	0.04	5.65	0.000	0.14	0.30
Direct effect of X on Y (RM → SB)						
Effect	se(HCo)	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
0.24	0.03	7.34	0.00	0.18	0.31	
Indirect effect of X on Y (RM → SB)						
Effect	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
	0.10	0.02	0.06	0.15		

Note. The level of confidence for all confidence intervals in the output is 95%. The number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals is 5,000. Elements may not sum exactly to totals due to rounding.

Note: Primary Data 2025

To test whether shopper attitude (SA) mediates the relationship between relationship marketing (RM) and shopper behaviour (SB), the PROCESS macro (Model 4) developed by Hayes (2022) using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval is employed. The results indicate that relationship marketing had a significant positive effect on

shopper attitude (Path a: $b = .47$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 10.40 < .001$). In turn, shopper attitude had a significant positive effect on shopper behaviour while controlling for relationship marketing (Path b: $b = .22$, $SE = 0.04$, $t = 5.65$, $p < .001$).

The indirect effect of relationship marketing on shopper behaviour through shopper attitude was statistically significant (Path ab = $.10$, BootSE = 0.02 , 95% CI [0.06 , 0.15]), as the bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero. When shopper attitude was included in the model, the direct effect of relationship marketing on shopper behaviour remained statistically significant (Path c': $b = .24$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 7.34$, $p < .001$).

Because both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant, the results support a partial mediation framework. The total effect of relationship marketing on shopper behaviour was $.24 + .10 = .34$; the direct effect is approximately 70% ($.24 / .34$), and the indirect effect = 30% ($.10 / .34$). Consequently, the null hypothesis, which states that shopper attitudes do not mediate the relationship between relationship marketing and shopper behaviour, is rejected.

The resulting fitted regression equation establishes the influence of two variables, relationship marketing and shopper attitude, on shopper behaviour and is summarised as follows. Step 1: Y_{SA} : Step 1: $Y_{SA} = 2.21 + 0.469(RM)$ indicates that for every 1 unit increase in relationship marketing, shopper attitude is expected to increase by 0.47 units. Step 2: $y_{sb} = 1.82 + 0.27(RM) + 0.19(SA)$ shows that for every 1 unit increase in relationship marketing, y_{sb} is expected to increase by 0.24 units, keeping shopper attitude constant. Further, for every one unit increase in shopper attitude, shopper behaviour is predicted to increase by 0.02 units, holding retail marketing constant.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the mediating influence of shoppers' attitudes on the relationship between retail marketing practices comprising transaction, relationship marketing and shopper behavior. It was hypothesized that shopper attitudes have no significant mediating effect on the relationship between retail marketing practices and shopper behavior. Two separate null hypotheses were proposed: one for transaction marketing and one for relationship marketing. The results led to the rejection of both null hypotheses, demonstrating that shopper attitudes partially mediate the relationship between retail marketing practices and shopper behavior because the behavior still happens through direct or indirect routes, and complement each other because both paths point in the same direction.

The results from both models showed that transaction and relationship marketing practices had positive and significant effects on shopper attitudes (Path a). The effect of shopper attitudes on shopper behavior, whilst controlling for transaction and relationship marketing practices (Path b), was positive and significant. While transaction marketing practices were effective at changing shopper behavior (Path a), the mediator shopper attitude did not carry the momentum very strongly into shopper behavior. Furthermore, the introduction of the mediator accounted for approximately one-third of the relationship, which was transmitted through shopper attitudes. Similarly, introducing shopper attitudes into the relationship marketing practice model indicated that approximately one third of relationship marketing practices' influence on shopper behavior was transmitted through the mediator.

The mechanics of how shopper attitudes transmit their effects to shopper behavior are explained by comparing paths a and b in transaction and relationship marketing mediation models. On the one hand, relationship marketing had a slightly larger proportion of its total effect operating directly 70.6% compared with 65.9% and was more enduring or sustained, as

well as less reliant on the fluctuating performance of the mediator. Transaction marketing was more dependent on the indirect effect because it had a higher proportion (34.11% compared with 29.63%). It relied more heavily on marketing changing attitudes, which, in turn, changed behavior; therefore, this finding aligns with assertions outlined by Hutt et al. (2024) that transaction marketing relies on aggressive marketing strategies.

This direct effect indicates that immediate mechanisms, rather than complex psychological factors, directly trigger shopper behavior. This indicates that transaction and relationship marketing variables are powerful enough to drive changes in shopper behavior entirely on their own. Furthermore, it indicates that other unmeasured psychological, behavioral, or strategic mechanisms exist. This aligns with findings by several scholars, specifically financial constraint (Wambugu et al. 2016), choice fatigue (Schwartz, 2004), evaluating preferences thoughtfully, and shoppers resorting to automatic responses to navigate immediate situations (Foxall, 2010), factors that diminish attitudes' ability to change behavior.

The findings suggest that consumer behavior can be effectively analyzed by considering both spatial and temporal dimensions. Utilitarian behavior, which is focused on practical needs and efficiency, typically initiates outside the supermarket, where consumers plan their purchases based on necessity. In contrast, hedonic behavior, characterized by the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment, is often stimulated once consumers enter the supermarket. The analysis of effect sizes within the models indicates that the direct effect was significantly larger than the indirect effect and fails to align with Bulbul and Menon's (2009) study showing that hedonism overrides inhibitions. This disparity highlights important insights into consumer behavior, suggesting that the shoppers involved in the study predominantly exhibited rational decision-making tendencies.

The dominance of the direct route in contributing to the total effect suggests that effective transaction marketing practices align with shoppers' logical and cost-benefit evaluations. To assess the practical significance of pathways, effect sizes were analyzed using path coefficients and the Proportion of Total Effect Mediated (PM) index by Cohen's (1988). The direct effect of transaction marketing ($c' = 0.2700$) nears the medium effect threshold of 0.30, highlighting its importance as a behavioral driver, while the indirect effect ($ab = 0.1372$) is considered small, not surpassing 0.25. This indicates that shoppers prioritize a seamless mechanical and direct experience over indirect emotional influences, mirroring Tzeng et al. (2016) and Njoka (2010). However, this operational focus does not exist in isolation; it is intertwined with the necessity of fostering a positive psychological attitude among consumers, mirroring Simonetti et al. (2026). The findings indicate that the hedonic pathway, which relates to shopper attitudes, is secondary to the primary focus on operational efficiency among supermarket shoppers and fails to mirror studies by Magidis et al. (2016) and Takao et al. (2011) that hedonic orientation has a stronger influence. This suggests that marketers in the retail industry should enhance the shopping atmosphere and experience, without compromising the fundamental utility of the exchange to align with Dokcen et al. (2021).

In business, transactional marketing relies heavily on rational appeals to secure immediate, short-term sales, while relationship marketing leverages deep emotional connections to build long-term customer loyalty gradually. Instead of a large indirect path driven by emotions, the strong direct path demonstrates that relationship marketing was built on structured commitment based on trust and operational dependency. Rather than relying on emotional sentiment to cultivate retention, the supermarket environment demands a more pragmatic approach to relationship building. When a retailer delivers flawless, frictionless operational execution, it

satisfies the consumer's rational goals. This consistent performance cultivates deep systemic trust over time, establishing long-term loyalty as a reliable aspect of consumers' routines. The study argues against the notion that transaction marketing is obsolete, emphasizing that effective relationship marketing cannot thrive without a foundation of transactional execution. This challenges the conventional belief that transaction marketing is outdated (Gummeson 1981), suggesting that relationship marketing cannot exist in a vacuum without transactional execution because building customer relationships requires a lengthy process of changing consumer mindsets. Instead, the inherent value of the relationship itself can lead to rapid consumer commitment and action, which aligns with research by Seth (2023) on personalization at scale.

The empirical findings challenge classical consumer behavior models by demonstrating that transaction and relationship marketing mechanisms drive behavioral outcomes directly, largely bypassing the traditional think-feel-act sequence. This evidence supports a partial mediation framework where marketing stimuli exert powerful direct effects on shopper behavior without requiring prior cognitive attitudinal realignment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Traditional marketing strategies often focus on changing consumer mindsets to enhance enjoyment or encourage deliberation about product value. However, the findings of this research demonstrate that effective operational and structural execution is a more powerful driver of revenue and the primary engine that drives consumer behavior far more effectively than abstract psychological states; however, it is intertwined with the necessity of fostering a positive psychological attitude among consumers as a secondary boost; however, it is intertwined with the necessity of fostering a positive psychological attitude among consumers. This insight suggests the need for a significant change in how resources are allocated within the industry. Companies should prioritize investments in database management workflows. By creating a deeply integrated operational infrastructure, supermarkets can automatically capture and predict shopper behavior.

Recommendations

To improve the accuracy and predictive capability of retail consumer studies, researchers should prioritize longitudinal research designs over cross-sectional approaches. This shift will allow for better tracking of consumer behavior and attitudes over time, addressing the limitations of single-visit feedback. Methodologies must also consider common method bias and omitted variable bias by utilizing multi-wave or multi-source data collection instead of synchronous self-reports. Future studies should analyze individual dataset items to provide deeper insights rather than relying on standardized datasets. Conceptually, models should evolve from a unidimensional view of consumer attitudes to a bidimensional framework to capture the interplay between hedonic and utilitarian motivations. Moreover, investigating additional mediators and external factors in supermarket settings is essential. Broadening research to include diverse e-commerce contexts will enrich the understanding of how digital platforms affect consumer behavior, particularly in business-to-consumer dynamics. The relationship between emotional engagement and habitual practices, such as loyalty, plays a crucial role in fostering consumer loyalty, as indicated by the significant paths in the RM framework.

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