



# ASSESSING THE ROLE OF DETERMINANTS ON CONSUMERS PURCHASE INTENTION AND CONSUMPTION OF READY TO EAT CONVENIENCE FOOD: PIZZA

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**Abstract:** Due to time constraints, changing lifestyles, and the rise of dual-income households, consumers are increasingly favouring ready-to-eat convenience foods over traditional meals. Despite their economic significance and growing demand, comprehensive research on the factors influencing the choice of ready-to-eat foods is lacking. This study aims to evaluate the impact of convenience, time constraints, cooking skills, price, processing technology, sensory appeal, quality, safety, and health on the purchase and consumption of ready-to-eat pizza. We surveyed 500 consumers using a structured questionnaire and employed statistical analysis methods for validation. Our findings indicate that convenience ( $\beta=0.85$ ) is the primary determinant of purchase and consumption, followed by competitive pricing ( $\beta=0.83$ ), cooking skills ( $\beta=0.72$ ), sensory appeal ( $\beta=0.69$ ), processing technology ( $\beta=0.68$ ), quality ( $\beta=0.63$ ), healthiness ( $\beta=0.60$ ), safety ( $\beta=0.56$ ), and time constraints ( $\beta=0.51$ ).

**Keywords:** Ready to eat food, determinants, purchase intention, consumption, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling, India.

## Introduction

Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods are convenient, requiring little preparation. They cater to busy individuals with limited culinary skills. In India, the RTE food market is projected to grow at a 4.49% CAGR from 2018-2025, led by major players like ITC, MTR, Kohinoor, Priya, and TTC (Business wire, 2016). Globally, the RTE food industry is expected to grow at a 7.7% CAGR from 2022-2032 [www.futuremarketinsights.com](http://www.futuremarketinsights.com)

Convenience is a key motivator for consumers to buy and consume convenience foods. Busy schedules, competition, limited cooking skills, and changing lifestyles drive the demand for ready-to-eat (RTE) convenience foods. Factors like time scarcity lead to less home cooking, increased fast food and ready-to-cook consumption, and fewer family meals (Jabs and Devine, 2006). Longer work hours, more women in the workforce, and the desire for leisure time contribute to the demand for convenient meal options. This trend is especially evident in India, where various factors have led to increased consumption of convenience foods. Cooking skills is important to provide nutritive and balanced diet for a healthy lifestyle. In industrialized Nations, cooking skills and motivation are diminishing fast due to lack of training from parents, multiple responsibilities, inclinations towards employment - oriented career, desire to have more leisure time, long

cooking hours, cleaning of cooking resources etc. irrespective of gender, cooking is perceived as a difficult and low priority task.

Price is a key factor influencing consumer food choices. Family income, disposable income, and availability are major economic drivers for convenience food consumption. Lifestyle changes, employment status, dual income, product availability, and multinational companies' presence in the food sector are significant drivers for convenience food preference in India (Veenma et al., 1995; Vijaybhaskar and Sundaram, 2012). Besides convenience, sensory attributes and health-related concerns, price is a critical determinant for choosing convenience foods. Particularly, low-income consumers place a high emphasis on price and value when making food choices

Advanced food processing tech enhances sensory, quality, safety, and health in ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. Novel processing saves time, retains nutrition, and boosts sensory appeal (taste, appearance, freshness, texture, color, smell), driving consumer interest. Quality certification details production, ingredients, nutrition, safety, and more, impacting consumer choices. Technologies like HPP, pulse UV light, and irradiation enhance RTE food. Food safety, governed by authorities and industries, significantly impacts purchasing. Consumer concerns include chemical, microbiological, and origin issues. Demographics like age, gender, education, marital, and employment status affect food safety knowledge and practices. Health is one of the prime concerns of consumers while purchasing and consuming RTE convenience food products.

## **Theoretical background and development of hypothesis**

### *Convenience orientation*

Convenience is a key motivator for consumers in purchasing and consuming convenience foods. Botonaki and Mattas (2010) linked convenience orientation to positive perceptions, purchase intentions, and consumption behaviors. Alam (2016) highlighted convenience as a primary driver for ready-to-eat food consumption. Numerous studies support the role of convenience in ready-to-eat food purchases (Ragaert et al., 2004; Ahlgren, 2005; Bertazzoli et al., 2005; Behrens et al., 2010; Hena et al., 2021b). Based on these findings, our study proposes the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Convenience orientation is positively related to purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

### *Time Scarcity*

Time scarcity is induced by various factors result in changes in food consumption patterns such as decrease in final preparation at home, increase in consumption of fast food, ready to cook food and decrease in family meals (Jabs and Devine, 2006). Djupegot et al. (2017) stated that consumers who face time scarcity were inclined towards shopping and consumption of convenience foods. Consumers who faced time scarcity may tend to prefer convenient alternatives (Evans, 2011). Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 2:** Time scarcity is positively related to purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

### *Lack of cooking Skills*

Cooking skills is important determinant which motivates and drives consumers towards purchase intention and consumption of convenience foods. Consumers with low cooking skills may be less well equipped to judge the right quantities needed for preparing their meals and therefore purchase more than they need (Van Doorn, 2016). Van der Horst and Siegrist (2007) mention low cooking skills as well as a driver for the demand for convenience. Wolfson et al. (2016) revealed that the major constraints of cooking from scratch in the United States were affordability, time scarcity and lack of motivation induced by lack of enjoyment in cooking food from basic ingredients. Considering the aforementioned research findings, the present study proposed the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3:** Lack of cooking skills is positively related with purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Sensory Appeal*

Due to Advances in food processing and packaging technologies, the sensory attributes have been improved considerably in recent years to motivate consumers towards convenience food choice (Ojha et al., 2015). The good taste, pleasant appearance, nice smell and appealing texture within sensory appeal were the most important factors influencing purchase intention, consumption and satisfaction of consumers towards convenience food (Hena et al., 2021a). The previous studies carried out under wide range of social, cultural and economical conditions revealed that sensory was the important motivating determinant influencing purchase intention and consumption of convenience foods (Gupta and Singh, 2016; Silva et al., 2017; Tan et al., 2017; Hena et al., 2021a,b). Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 4:** Sensory appeal is positively related with purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Quality Attributes*

The quality of convenience food products drives consumers towards its purchase and consumption therefore it is directly linked to the consumers' perception, purchase decision and consumption behaviour (Brunso et al 2002; Grunert, 2005; Van Rijswijk and frewer, 2008). Mascarello et al. (2015) stated that consumer perception for quality of food products considerably influences the purchase decision and consumption of convenience food. Previous studies revealed that food quality was most crucial component of consumers' satisfaction and there is a positive relationship between the food quality and customer satisfaction (Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Namkung and Jang, 2007; Hena et al., 2021b). Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 5:** Quality attribute is positively related with purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Safety Attributes*

Food Safety is one of the most influential factors in terms of shopping and consumption of ready to eat convenience food products. Food safety is directly associated with public health, food security, environmental protection and sustainable development (Hena et al., 2021a). A studies carried out in past revealed that there is a significant relationship between food safety and purchase intention of fast foods (Henson, 1995; Mai, 2016). Previous studies show that safety is a key determinant influences shopping and consumption of convenience food products (Yin et al., 2010; Hena et al., 2021b). Based on Aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 6:** Food safety is positively related to purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods

#### *Health*

Health is a multidimensional construct that embodies overall wellbeing of consumers regarding physical, mental and social Aspects (Geeroms et al., 2008). Olsen et al. (2012) reported that healthiness was the most important motivating factor which drives consumers towards shopping and consumption of convenience food products. Consumers prefer products that claims health benefits (Aschzemann witzel and Hamm, 2010). Based on Aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed

**Hypothesis 7:** Health is positively related to purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Price*

Food price is one of the most influencing determinant for ready to eat convenience food choice. Steinhaus et al. (2011) revealed that price was important determinant for low income consumers in context of food choice. The low income consumers are more concerned of price and value of food product as compared with high income consumers. Sosa et al. (2014) revealed that the income level of consumers was one of the crucial factors which influenced food choice motives in Argentina. Pula et al. (2014) reported that the consumer inclined towards sensory attributes of food gave priority to price too. Based on Aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed

**Hypothesis 8:** Price is positively related to purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Processing Technology*

The advanced food processing technology plays an important role in improving and maintaining sensory, quality, safety and health attributes as well as the acceptability of convenience food products. The high pressure processing (HPP) and pulsed electric field (PEF) processing technologies developed in the recent past maintained sensory, quality and nutritive value along with higher environment friendly food processing technologies compared with traditional methods. The consumers perceived that advanced and novel food processing technologies improve sensory quality and safety of convenience foods (Rubio et al., 2007; Perrea et al., 2015; Misra et al., 2017). Sorenson and Henchion (2011) reported that in order to leverage the technological advancement in food products, companies should incorporate efficient strategies to communicate and educate the target consumer segments about the technological innovations. Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 9:** Processing Technology is positively related with purchase intention of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Purchase Intention*

Hawa et al. (2014) reported that 'easy to use' and 'time saving' were the most important factors which influenced purchase intention of consumers for convenience food. Further they stated that health, quality, brand image and availability also had strong influence on consumer purchase intention for convenience food. Kakos et al. (2015) revealed that perceived risk, good value for money, social value and brand awareness were the most important factors which significantly influenced purchase intention of consumers. Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

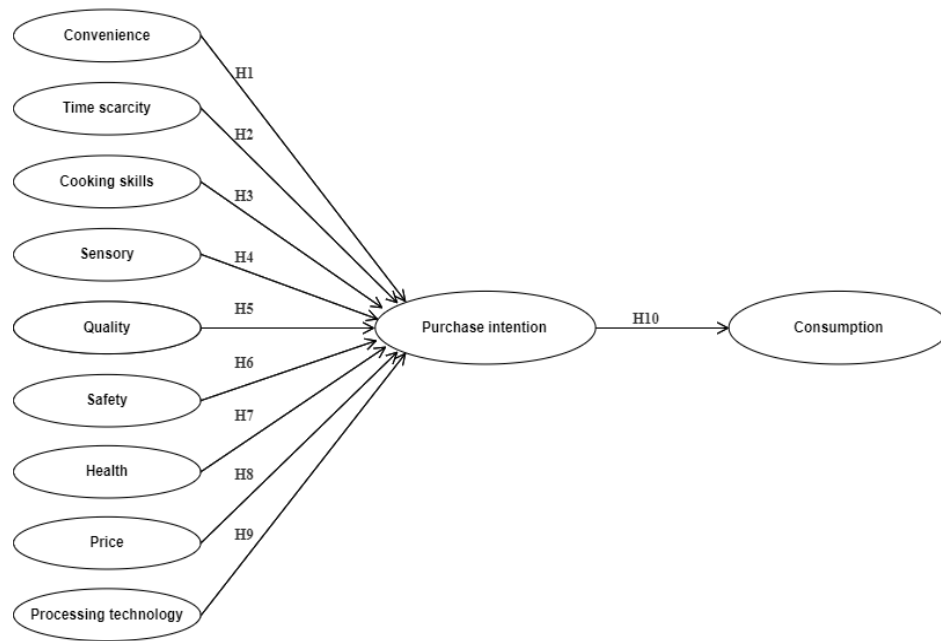
**Hypothesis 10:** Purchase Intention is positively related with consumption of ready to eat convenience foods.

#### *Consumption*

Prescott et al. (2002) revealed that convenience, sensory appeal, price, health, mood, natural content and familiarity were the important factors influencing consumption behaviour of consumers towards convenience food products in New Zealand, Malaysia, Taiwan and Japan. Furthermore, price, sensory appeal, natural content and health were most important motivating factors which influenced consumption behaviour of consumers for convenience food in Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan and Malaysia. Akbay et al. (2007) revealed that socio-demographics (age, education level, family size, presence of children, family income), attitude, food price, healthiness and preference of family members significantly influenced the consumption behaviour of fast food in Turkey. Employment status, household size, income level, perceived time pressure, and female workforce participation influence ready to eat food consumption. Based on aforementioned research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 11:** Consumption is positively related with satisfaction of ready to eat convenience foods.

The conceptual model for the current study is based on aforementioned research findings to assess the role of convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, price, processing technology, sensory, quality, safety and health on purchase intention and consumption of ready-to-eat pizza (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model

## Material and methods

### *Development, pre-testing and structure of questionnaire*

The questionnaire development process is crucial to avoid irrelevant or incorrect data collection. It involves setting research goals, formulating questions, and aligning them with research objectives (Phellas et al., 2012). Our questionnaire builds on previous studies and consumer input to explore convenience, time scarcity, price, cooking skills, sensory appeal, quality, safety, and health factors in the context of ready-to-eat foods, specifically pizza. The questionnaire was pre-tested for accuracy and reliability before the main study, involving 30 participants, including in-service personnel and food experts (Hena et al., 2021a, b). Participants identified potential issues with the questionnaire and provided feedback on design and interpretation, focusing on factors like convenience, time scarcity, price, cooking skills, sensory appeal, quality, safety, health, and processing technology for ready-to-eat pizza choice. Participant feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire for precise data collection (Pieniak et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2015; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021a, b).

### *Participants*

The non-probability purposive sampling method was adopted for recruitment of the participants because researcher was targeting a specific group of participants as they the major consumers of RTE convenience food (Tan et al., 2016; Hena et al., 2021a,b). The present study comprised of 500 participants / consumers from two cities of western India. The sample size of 500 participants are more than 400 participants as we recommended over the population of 0.25 million (Research Advisor, 2006; Singh and Kathauria, 2016; Hena et al., 2021a,b).

### *Data Collection*

The pre-tested questionnaire was distributed to 500 consumers in two cities of western India. The data was collected from in service personnel from teaching institution and corporate sectors. The researchers were asked to distribute the questionnaire to the participants and brief about purpose and objectives of the study. The participants were briefed about content of questionnaire and were requested to respond each question from questionnaire. The influence of convenience orientation, time scarcity, price, cooking skills, sensory appeal, quality attributes, safety attributes, health attributes, processing technology on purchase intention and consumption of consumers towards RTE convenience food was determined on five-point likert scale (Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, don't know = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5). The participants / consumers were asked to choose one from 1 to 5 for each question (Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021 a,b).

### Data analysis

SPSS v24 estimated descriptive statistics (mean, SD, skewness, kurtosis) and Cronbach's alpha for questionnaire reliability ( $\alpha > 0.70$ ) (Nunnally, 1978; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Hena et al., 2021a,b). AMOS v23 conducted CFA and SEM. Composite reliability ( $\geq 0.70$ ) assessed measurement model reliability (Nunnally, 1978; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021a,b). Factor loading and average variance extracted validated the model ( $\geq 0.50$ ) (Nunnally, 1978; Pieniak et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2010; Contini et al., 2018; Hena et al., 2021a,b). Fit indices (CFI, TLI, GFI, RMSEA, SRMR) evaluated model fit (Hair et al., 2010; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Contini et al., 2018; Hena et al., 2021a,b).

The structural equation modeling (SEM) was carried to test the proposed hypotheses. The structural model was constructed to examine the association between convenience orientation, time scarcity, cooking skills, price, sensory appeal, quality attributes, safety attributes and healthiness with purchase intention and consumption of convenience food. The CFI, TLI, GFI, RMSEA, SRMR and  $\chi^2/df$  (Chi-square / degree of freedom) were determined to assess the fit of the structural model (Rezai et al., 2014; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021 a,b). The standardized estimate (path coefficient), t-value and p-value were used to test the hypotheses (Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Konuk, 2019, Hena et al., 2021 a, b).

### Results

#### Descriptive statistics

Table 1 summarizes participant demographics, including students and professionals from teaching and corporate sectors. The gender breakdown is 67.20% male and 32.80% female. Age distribution: 37.60% were 18-25, 44% were 26-35, 13% were 36-45, and 5.40% were 46-65+. Marital status: 52.60% single, 47.40% married. Occupation: 40.60% employed, 59.40% unemployed. Education: 6.40% had 10th qualification, 0.60% had 10+2, 23.40% were postgraduates, 2.80% held diplomas, and 0.40% had a Doctoral Degree.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of consumer focus group for ready to eat Pizza.

Demographics variables		Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Gender	Male	336	67.20
	Female	164	32.80
Age (Years)	18-25	188	37.60
	26-35	220	44.00
	36-45	65	13.00
	46-65	27	5.40
Marital status	Single	263	52.60
	Married	237	47.40
Employment status	Unemployed	297	59.40
	Employed	162	40.60
Education level	10	32	6.40
	10+2	3	0.60
	Diploma	14	2.80
	Undergraduate	331	66.20
	Masters	117	23.40
	Doctoral	2	0.40

Note: Total Sample Size=500; 10= high school; 10+2 = senior secondary school

The mean participant score of the items revealed that the “Easy to cook/Prepare” within convenience orientation; “Busy and Hectic work schedule” within Time Scarcity; “Limited Knowledge about cooking” within Cooking Skills; “Tastes Good” Within Sensory Appeal; “Quality certification” within quality Attribute; “Doesn’t contain any non- permissible additives” within safety attributes; “Feeling happy after consuming ready to eat food” within health attributes; “good value for money” within food price and “Processing techniques maintain good taste, smell and texture” within Processing technology were the most important factors in relation to purchase intention and consumption of ready to eat pizza (Appendix A; Table 2).

The skewness and kurtosis of convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, sensory, quality, safety, health, price, processing technology, purchase intention, and consumption for ready-to-eat pizza fall within acceptable thresholds of -1 to 1 and -2 to 2, respectively (Table 2). These results indicate a normal distribution for these factors (Muthen and Kaplan, 1985; Olsen et al., 2012; Rezai et al., 2014; Hena et al., 2021a, b).

**Table 2.** Mean participant's score, factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted of product determinants influencing purchase intention and consumption of consumers for ready to eat pizza.

Construct	Item Code	Mean Score	Factor loading	p – value	$\alpha$	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Convenience (CNV)					0.838	0.825	0.712
	• NV 1	C 4.27	0.698	***			
	• NV 2	C 3.88	0.732	***			
	• NV 3	C 3.98	0.798	***			
	• NV 4	C 3.84	0.902	***			
	• NV 5	C 4.54	0.836	***			
	• NV 6	C 4.50	0.787	***			
	• NV 7	C 4.40	0.829	***			
	• NV 8	C 3.93	0.775	***			
	• NV 9	C 3.84	0.791	***			
	• NV 10	C 4.01	0.887	***			
Time Scarcity (TS)					0.824	0.802	0.846
	• 1	TS 4.12	.869	***			
	• 2	TS 2.69	.941	***			
	• 3	TS 3.80	.790	***			
	• 4	TS 4.42	.907	***			
	• 5	TS 4.07	.822	***			
	• 6	TS 3.64	.801	***			
	• 7	TS 2.71	.954	***			
	• 8	TS 3.15	.823	***			
	• 9	TS 3.42	.798	***			
	• 10	TS 4.23	.954	***			
	• 11	TS 3.24	.846	***			
• 12	TS 3.53	.900	***				

•	TS	3.38	.851	***			
13							
•	TS	3.32	.752	***			
14							
•	TS	3.75	.718	***			
15							
•	TS	4.52	.875	***			
16							
•	TS	3.69	.696	***			
17							
•	TS	4.20	.912	***			
18							
•	TS	4.04	.801	***			
19							
•	TS	3.59	.733	***			
20							
•	TS	3.23	.934	***			
21							
<b>Cooking Skill (CKS)</b>					0.836	0.822	0.806
•	C	4.27	0.721	***			
KS 1							
•	C	3.76	0.702	***			
KS 2							
•	C	3.93	0.856	***			
KS 3							
•	C	3.97	0.935	***			
KS 4							
•	C	4.26	0.795	***			
KS 5							
<b>Sensory (SEN)</b>					0.855	0.925	0.832
•	SE	4.20	0.785	***			
N 1							
•	SE	4.21	0.813	***			
N 2							
•	SE	4.20	0.789	***			
N 3							
•	SE	4.53	0.772	***			
N 4							
•	SE	4.40	0.863	***			
N 5							
•	SE	4.29	0.955	***			
N 6							
<b>Nutritional Quality (QUL)</b>					0.756	0.793	0.863
•	Q	3.22	0.902	***			
UL 1							
•	Q	3.11	0.765	***			
UL 2							
•	Q	3.17	0.821	***			
UL 3							
•	Q	3.31	0.906	***			
UL 4							
•	Q	3.08	0.861	***			
UL 5							
•	Q	3.10	0.809	***			
UL 6							
•	Q	3.86	0.965	***			
UL 7							
<b>Safety (SFTY)</b>					0.822	0.855	0.867
•	SF	4.01	0.736	***			
TY 1							
•	SF	4.09	0.861	***			
TY 2							
•	SF	4.03	0.777	***			
TY 3							



	•	SF	4.14	0.893	***			
	TY 4							
	•	SF	4.04	0.921	***			
	TY 5							
	•	SF	4.00	0.987	***			
	TY 6							
	•	SF	4.00	0.875	***			
	TY 7							
<b>Health (HLT)</b>						0.863	0.896	0.852
	•	H	3.03	0.783	***			
	LT 1							
	•	H	3.18	0.698	***			
	LT 2							
	•	H	3.39	0.916	***			
	LT 3							
	•	H	3.39	0.669	***			
	LT 4							
	•	H	2.89	0.855	***			
	LT 5							
	•	H	3.37	0.964	***			
	LT 6							
	•	H	3.80	0.922	***			
	LT 7							
	•	H	3.89	0.913	***			
	LT 8							
	•	H	4.34	0.897	***			
	LT 9							
<b>Price (PRC)</b>						0.769	0.806	0.871
	•	P	3.97	0.965	***			
	RC 1							
	•	P	3.62	0.739	***			
	RC 2							
	•	P	4.07	0.855	***			
	RC 3							
	•	P	3.85	0.824	***			
	RC 4							
	•	P	3.45	0.897	***			
	RC 5							
	•	P	3.51	0.962	***			
	RC 6							
	•	P	4.15	0.833	***			
	RC 7							
<b>Processing Technology (PCT)</b>						0.818	0.833	0.865
	•	P	3.70	0.806	***			
	CT 1							
	•	P	3.94	0.921	***			
	CT 2							
	•	P	3.68	0.861	***			
	CT 3							
	•	P	3.80	0.722	***			
	CT 4							
	•	P	3.54	0.833	***			
	CT 5							
	•	P	3.79	0.987	***			
	CT 6							
	•	P	3.89	0.929	***			
	CT 7							
	•	P	4.20	0.798	***			
	CT 8							
	•	P	4.47	0.902	***			
	CT 9							
<b>Purchase Intention (PI)</b>						0.907	0.923	0.818
	•	PI	4.17	0.932	***			
	1							

•	PI	4.20	0.861	***
2				
•	PI	3.53	0.849	***
3				
•	PI	3.67	0.791	***
4				
•	PI	3.63	0.837	***
5				
•	PI	4.42	0.698	***
6				
•	PI	4.19	0.608	***
7				
•	PI	4.51	0.921	***
8				

<b>Consumption (CON)</b>					0.826	0.848	0.840
•	C	4.11	0.784	***			
ON 1							
•	C	3.54	0.692	***			
ON 2							
•	C	4.15	0.979	***			
ON 3							
•	C	4.17	0.852	***			
ON 4							
•	C	3.59	0.865	***			
ON 5							

Measurement model fit indexes: CFI= 0.925; TLI= 0.912; GFI=0.923; RMSEA= 0.077; SRMR=0.050

\*\*\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.01$

### Measurement Model

The factor loadings for items related to convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, sensory perception, quality, safety, health, price, processing technology, purchase intention, and consumption of ready-to-eat pizza were all significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) and ranged from 0.608 to 0.987, exceeding the threshold of 0.50. All items within these constructs were included in the analysis of factors influencing consumer purchase intention and consumption (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2010; Januszewska et al., 2011; Pula et al., 2014; Hena et al., 2021a, b). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for these constructs ranged from 0.756 to 0.907, exceeding the threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Januszewska et al., 2011; Calvo-Porrall et al., 2013; Ricci et al., 2018; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021a, b). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for these constructs ranged from 0.712 to 0.871, exceeding the threshold of 0.50, confirming convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010; Contini et al., 2018; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021 a,b). Furthermore, the square root of AVE estimates (diagonal values) exceeded the correlation estimates amongst constructs, confirming discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Konuk, 2019; Hena et al., 2021a, b)."

The Comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), Goodness of fit index (GFI), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) indices were used to assess the overall fit of the conceptual / measurement model. The CFI was 0.925 ( $\geq 0.90$ ), TLI was 0.912 ( $\geq 0.90$ ), GFI was 0.923 ( $\geq 0.90$ ), RMSEA was 0.077 ( $\leq 0.08$ ) and SRMR was 0.050 ( $\leq 0.08$ ) which were within the threshold values (Table 2). The CFI, TLI, GFI, RMSEA and SRMR values showed the good fit of the conceptual / measurement model (Hair et al., 2006; Lu et al., 2015; Lassoud and Hobbs, 2015; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2017; Soon, 2018; Hena et al., 2021 a, b).

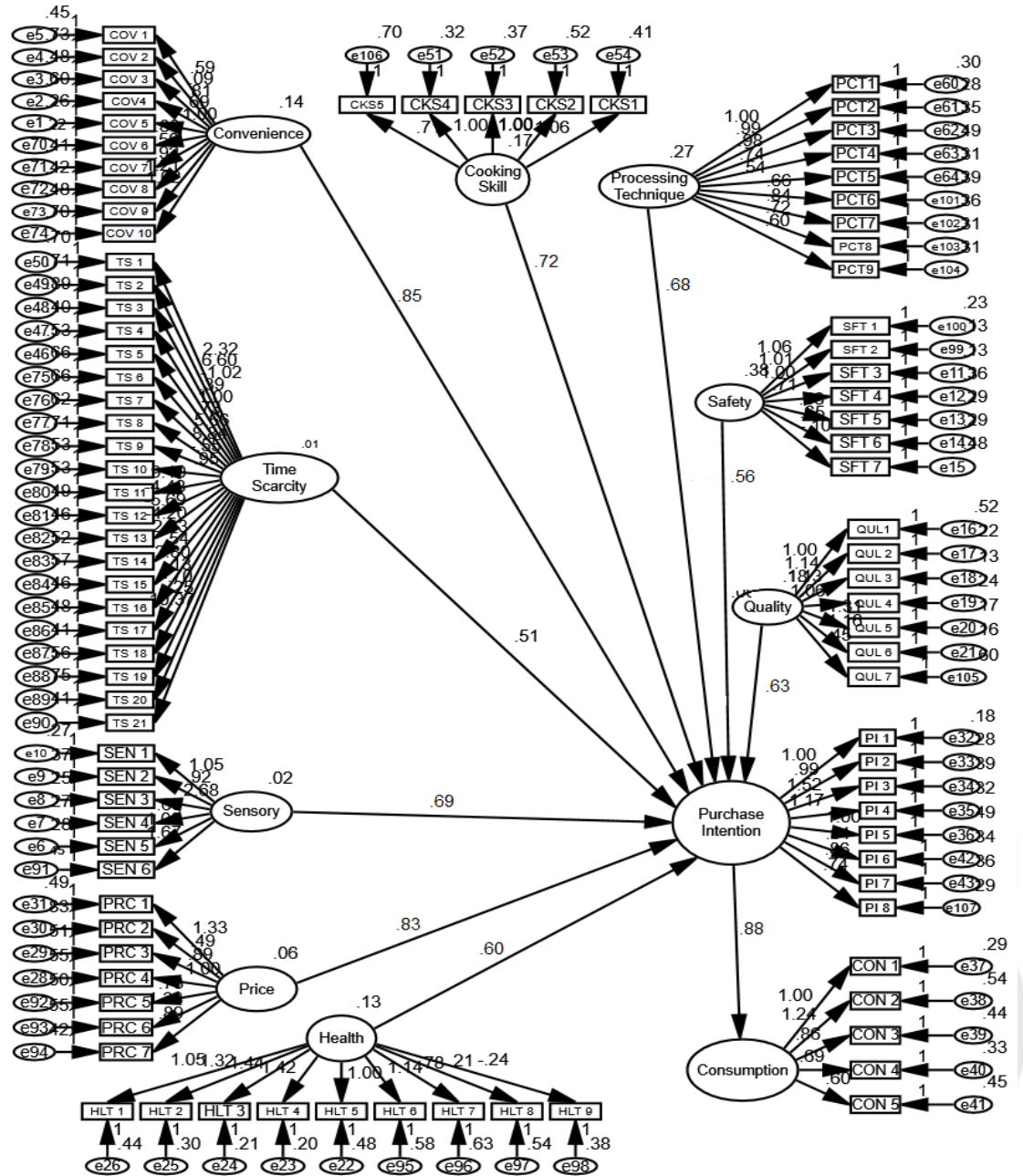
**Table 3.** Discriminant validity of the measurement model

	CNV	TS	CKS	SEN	QUL	SFTY	HLT	PRC	PCT	PI	CON
<b>CNV</b>	<b>.796</b>										
<b>TS</b>	.712**	<b>.829</b>									
<b>CKS</b>	.644**	.695**	<b>.761</b>								
<b>SEN</b>	.620**	.677**	.526**	<b>.798</b>							
<b>QUL</b>	.751**	.710**	.566**	.461**	<b>.808</b>						
<b>SFTY</b>	.643**	.609**	.540**	.522**	.487**	<b>.696</b>					
<b>HLT</b>	.585**	.736**	.604**	.519**	.502**	.424	<b>.786</b>				
<b>PRC</b>	.533**	.507**	.514**	.598**	.437**	.410	.647**	<b>.829</b>			
<b>PCT</b>	.752**	.428**	.453**	.669**	.519**	.421**	.513**	.680**	<b>.698</b>		

PI	.605**	.538**	.521**	.584**	.597**	.419**	.635**	.799**	.475	.779
CON	.657**	.713**	.438**	.468**	.615**	.484**	.624**	.469**	.562	.710**

**Structural Model**

The study used SEM to analyze factors influencing ready-to-eat pizza consumption. The model fit was acceptable: CFI = 0.944, TLI = 0.928, GFI = 0.916, RMSEA = 0.061, SRMR = 0.065,  $\chi^2/df = 3.3$  (Figure 2). These examined associations between convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, sensory appeal, quality, safety, health, price, and technology with pizza consumption (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Rezai et al., 2014; Singh and Kathuria, 2016; Contini et al., 2018; Hena et al., 2021a, b).



Structural model fit indexes: CFI: 0.944; TLI: 0.928; GFI: 0.916; RMSEA: 0.061; SRMR: 0.065;  $\chi^2/df = 3.3$

**Figure 2.** Structural equation modelling to assess the role of convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, price, sensory appeal, quality, safety and healthiness for Pizza.

The structural model in Figure 2 and Table 4 reveals associations between various factors and the purchase intention and consumption of ready-to-eat pizza. Hypotheses 1 through 10, each suggesting a positive relationship between different factors and purchase intention, were all supported ( $\beta$  values ranged from 0.51 to 0.88,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

**Table 4.** Structural model results to examine the association between convenience, sensory, quality, safety, health, and price determinants and purchase intention, consumption of Pizza

Structural Path	Standardized estimate (B)	Standard error (SE)	t-value	P-value	Results
Convenience orientation → Purchase intention	0.85	0.019	33.658	***	Accepted
Sensory attributes → Purchase intention	0.69	0.011	29.971	***	Accepted
Quality attributes → Purchase intention	0.63	0.029	17.522	***	Accepted
Safety attributes → Purchase intention	0.56	0.030	19.358	***	Accepted
Health → Purchase intention	0.60	0.033	21.745	***	Accepted
Competitive price → Purchase intention	0.83	0.024	25.691	***	Accepted
Time scarcity → Purchase intention	0.51	0.079	11.625	***	Accepted
Lack of cooking Skill → Purchase intention	0.72	0.044	22.554	***	Accepted
Novel processing Technique → Purchase intention	0.68	0.116	29.634	***	Accepted
Purchase intention → Consumption	0.88	0.049	69.131	***	Accepted

\*\*\* Significant at  $p \leq 0.01$ .

### Discussions

Convenience is a significant driver for ready-to-eat pizza consumption (Hena et al., 2021a). Time scarcity positively influences pizza purchase and consumption (Table 4). Busy schedules are a major factor (Table 2) (Silliman et al., 2004). Cooking skills impact nutritive diet choices, with declining expertise in cities (Priyadarshini, 2015; Gupta and Singh, 2016). Limited knowledge is a key factor (Table 2) (Van der Horst and Siegrist, 2007). Sensory appeal, especially taste, heavily influences convenience food choices (Hena et al., 2021a; Lanza et al., 2011; Vita et al., 2016; Braglieri et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2017). Quality attributes, especially certification, drive pizza preference (Mascarello et al., 2015). Safety is crucial, with a focus on permissible additives (Yin et al., 2010; Hena et al., 2021b; Henson, 1995; Mai, 2016). Health-related satisfaction is influential (Table 4) (Vita et al., 2016; Combet et al., 2014). The study suggests broader research for generalization (recommendations for further research)."

### Conclusions

The confirmatory factor analysis showed the questionnaire's reliability in assessing factors affecting the purchase and consumption of ready-to-eat pizza, including convenience, time scarcity, cooking skills, technology, price, sensory appeal, quality, safety, and healthiness. The model fit indices indicated a good fit for these factors. Convenience, competitive price, and lack of cooking skills were found to be the most significant motivators. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on factors influencing ready-to-eat pizza choices in Indian culture. It highlights the importance of convenience and competitive pricing in emerging economies like India. Additionally, it emphasizes the need for food industries to prioritize health and safety in food processing and for government agencies to enforce quality and safety regulations for ready-to-eat foods, particularly pizza.

### Appendix A

Description of the questionnaire

#### Section 1 - Socio-Demographic characteristics

Gender

Age

Marital Status

Education Level

Occupation

Type of family

Number of family member

Food habits

Food Preferences

Type of ready to eat food prefer

Frequency of purchasing Ready to eat food

Health Concerns

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**Section 2 - Convenience orientation**

CONV1 - I prefer ready to eat food due to availability of variety of ready to eat near to my residence

CONV2 - I prefer ready to eat food due to availability of variety of ready to eat food near to my work place

CONV3 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is easily available in supermarkets, grocery store and 24 hours food outlets

CONV4 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is easy to plan meals for family / guests with short notice

CONV5 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is easy to prepare / cook

CONV6 - I prefer ready to eat food because it requires very little time to cook / prepare

CONV7 - I prefer ready to eat food because it requires little physical effort to cook and clean up

CONV8 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is easy to store

CONV9 - I prefer ready to eat food because its waste disposal is easy

CONV10 - I prefer ready to eat food because it makes life easier

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**Section 3 - Time Scarcity**

TS1 - I prefer ready to eat food due to long working hours

TS2 - I prefer ready to eat food because I am a working mother

TS3 - I prefer ready to eat food due to long commuting distance between my home and work place

TS4 - I prefer ready to eat food due to my busy life style

TS5 - I prefer ready to eat food due to the social responsibilities assigned to me

TS6 - I prefer ready to eat food due to the unavailability of domestic help

TS7 - I prefer ready to eat food because we both are employed (husband and wife)

TS8 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend significant no. of hours for teaching my children

TS9 - I prefer ready to eat food because I do office work at home

TS10 - I prefer ready to eat food because I take care of my elderly parents

TS11 - I prefer ready to eat food because I take care of my children at home

TS12 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend significant time in social networking sites and watching television

TS13 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend a lot of time playing video / computer / mobile games

TS14 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend significant time towards physical fitness and grooming

TS15 - I prefer ready to eat food due to my odd working hours

TS16 - I prefer ready to eat food due to my busy and hectic work schedule

TS17 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend significant time in hobbies (Music, photography, reading, gardening, movies, etc)

TS18 - I prefer ready to eat food because it saves energy

TS19 - I prefer ready to eat food because I am always in rush due to time pressure

TS20 - I prefer ready to eat food because I spend significant number of hours for religious activities

TS21 - I prefer ready to eat food due to spending significant time on my children's extra circular activities and educational coaching

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**Section 4 - Cooking skills**

CKS1 - I prefer ready to eat food because I have limited knowledge about cooking

CKS2 - I prefer ready to eat food because I don't know how to cook food from scratch

CKS3 - I prefer ready to eat food because I can't cook variety of foods as per the liking of my family members

CKS4 - I prefer ready to eat food because I can't match the taste that is found in ready to eat food

CKS5 - I prefer ready to eat food because I didn't acquire any cooking skills from my parents / grandparents / formal training

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**Section 5 - Sensory appeal**

SEN1 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has pleasant appearance

SEN2 - I prefer ready to eat food because it smells nice.

SEN3 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has pleasant texture.

SEN4 - I prefer ready to eat food because it tastes good

SEN5 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has attractive color.

SEN6 - I prefer ready to eat food because it looks fresh.

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**Section 6 - Quality aspects**

- QUL1 - I prefer ready to eat food because of its high nutritive value.  
 QUL2 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has high mineral content.  
 QUL3 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has high vitamin content.  
 QUL4 - I prefer ready to eat food because it contains natural ingredients.  
 QUL5 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has high fiber content.  
 QUL6 - I prefer ready to eat food because it contains anti-oxidants.  
 QUL7 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has necessary quality certification
- 

### Section 7 - Safety aspects

- SFTY1 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is free of hormones  
 SFTY2 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is free of insecticides  
 SFTY3 - I prefer ready to eat food because it is free of pesticides  
 SFTY4 - I prefer ready to eat food because it doesn't contain any non-permissible additives  
 SFTY5 - I prefer ready to eat food because it doesn't contain any non-permissible colour  
 SFTY6 - I prefer ready to eat food because it doesn't contain any artificial ingredients  
 SFTY7 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has necessary safety certification
- 

### Section 8 - Health aspects

- HLT1 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has low calories  
 HLT2 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has low fat content  
 HLT3 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has low salt content  
 HLT4 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has low sugar content  
 HLT5 - I prefer ready to eat food because it provide me a balanced diet  
 HLT6 - I prefer ready to eat food because it keeps me healthy  
 HLT7 - I prefer ready to eat food because it keeps me active  
 HLT8 - I prefer ready to eat food because it has necessary health certification  
 HLT9 - I am feeling happy after consuming ready to eat food  
 HLT10 - I am having more energy after consuming ready to eat food
- 

### Section 9 - Food price

- PRC1 - Ready to eat food is not expensive  
 PRC2 - Ready to eat food is cheap  
 PRC3 - Ready to eat food is economical because I save considerable amount of time and physical effort  
 PRC4 - Ready to eat food is economical because I get more variety spending lesser amount of money  
 PRC5 - Ready to eat food is cheaper due to discount price  
 PRC6 - Ready to eat food is cheaper due to promotional offer  
 PRC7 - Ready to eat food is good value for money
- 

### Section 10 - Processing techniques

- PCT1 - I purchase ready to eat food because I am familiar with processing techniques.  
 PCT2 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing techniques are as per International norms and standard.  
 PCT3 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing industry uses cutting edge technologies.  
 PCT4 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing techniques are environmentally friendly.  
 PCT5 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing industry uses natural ingredients for processing of food  
 PCT6 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing industry uses high quality ingredients for processing of food  
 PCT7 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing techniques improves the shelf life  
 PCT8 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing techniques maintain high safety standards  
 PCT9 - I purchase ready to eat food because the processing techniques maintain good, taste, smell and texture
-

**Section11 - Purchase intention**

- PI1 - I plan to buy ready to eat food  
 PI2 - I will continue to buy ready to eat food to save time  
 PI3 - I am ready to pay more for ready to eat food  
 PI4 - I will buy ready to eat food to reduce environmental damage  
 PI5 - I will buy ready to eat food to improve quality of life  
 PI6 - I will buy ready to eat food because it is readily available and easy to prepare  
 PI7 - I will continue to buy ready to eat food as there are choices available for multi cuisines  
 PI8 - I will continue to buy ready to eat food due to its excellent taste

**Section 12 - Consumption behaviour**

- CON1 - I always consume ready to eat food  
 CON2 - I consume ready to eat food even if the price is high  
 CON3 - I consume ready to eat food from specific brand due to its high quality, safety and packaging  
 CON4 - I consume ready to eat food due to the availability of their multi cuisine options  
 CON5 - I consume ready to eat food because it is good for my health

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