# Factors affecting the consumption of confectionery products among the Youth: A case of Maharagama divisional secretariat division

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## 1. Introduction

Obesity is a significant public health challenge faced by majority of Sri Lankans. Another significant point is the increased nutritional and health concern in recent years. The effect of the relationship between nutrition and health on confectionery items has increased recently. Confectionery products are the official product classes that distinguishes the chocolate and other sugar confectionery. Sri Lankan bakery and confectionery industry is one of the largest industries in the food industry. The complexity of the consumer purchasing pattern has made the understanding of consumer behaviour a tremendous issue. Social-economics factors such as gender, age, educational level, perception, nutritional level are examples for this. This study only focused on a few products such as biscuits, chocolate, candies, and snacks for the convenience of analysing the results. The urban population is more inclined toward the consumption of confectionery compared to its rural counterparts. People most commonly consume confectioneries just for taste, convenience, and as snacks. But altogether the excessive consumption of confectionery products roots different types of non-communicable diseases. (Yakunina et al., 2021). On the other hand, the adult generation should avoid consuming these types of food because it has the power to create health issues. Therefore, this research aimed to analyse the consumer habits towards the confectionery food items and their choice among the four selected products. The main objective of the study was to identify the factors influencing the consumption of confectionery products such as biscuits, chocolates, candies, and snacks among the demography of Maharagama area. Lack of related studies in the area highlights the importance of current research to the industry.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Maharagama DS division of Colombo district was selected as the research location for this study. The research approach was deductive approach and the study was conducted mainly based on primary data. The sample consisted of 240 demographic groups and data collecting tools were questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was designed to identify and quantify the factors that influence the customers for their consumption of confectionery products. Socioeconomic factors like income level, family status, and social status were taken into consideration. Simple random sampling technique was instrumental in gathering data for the study. Focus group discussions were conducted in each village of the Maharagama DS division by participating 5-10 respondents. Secondary data were collected from journals, reports, and internet. Data were analyzed using binary logistic regression and descriptive statistics. SPSS version 19.0 IBM software and descriptive statistics were used to examine the frequency of different variables. Logistic regression was used to calculate the relationship between a dependent variable and other variables. The variables evaluated included age (categorical), gender, brand, nutritional level, income level (continuous), taste, non-communicable diseases, and package.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The data were analysed using binary logistic regression. The analysis was performed only on complete datasets, and the number of analysed questionnaires were reduced to 200. From the participants 34% were female. The average age of the respondent were 25 years (continuous variable) which is very close to the population mean. 43% percent of the respondent were fully employed, 17.8% were part-time employed and 18% are still studying. 13% of the sample were unemployed. Majority of respondents in Maharagama DS division recorded a mean household income of Rs. 40 000.

A logistic regression was used to identify the factors affecting for the consumption of confectionary food among youth. Results revealed that there is a relationship between the factors (independent variables: age, gender, taste, package, nutritional level, income level and educational level and the dependent variable ''Do you consume confectionery food '' (Yes-1, No-2)". Omnibus test of model coefficient table indicated that probability of obtaining Chi-square statistic was 43.080. The variable gender (0.000) was highly significant in this case according the table and there could be gender preferences towards the consumption of biscuit and confectionery foods like chocolate. According to the table 01 the variable taste (0.006) was significant at α=0.10 and it suggested that the people considered the taste of the product before purchasing it. The independent variable age (0.062) was also significant at α=0.10. However, the variables such as the presence of non-communicable diseases, nutritional level income level of the family did not seem to be significant and young people do not pay attention on those factors when they purchase confectionaries. But the consumers paid attention for the package and the brand name of the particular product (table 01). Brand name of the product was significant at the α=0.10 and it reveals the effect from brand name on the purchasing behaviour. The factor packaging (0.072) of the product also affected for the purchase of the food. It was significant at the level of α = 0.10. All significant factors indicated that increasing the influence increased odds of consumption. Age as an important demographic factor in this study, revealed that age group 16-18 years of age consumed confectionery items more than the rest of the age groups (78%). It is important to know which age group pay more attention on confectionery items to deciding their purchasing habits. International brands such as Ferrero Rocher, Pringles and Mars recorded higher preference than local confectionery brands. Preference for the local brands were only 20% and the international brands were 80%.

**Table 01. Variables in equation**

|  | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig | Exp(B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | .579 | .271 | 4.567 | 1 | .000 | 1.785 |
| Income level | -.077 | .174 | .193 | 1 | .660 | .926 |
| taste | .489 | .565 | .750 | 1 | .006 | 1.631 |
| Age | .154 | .083 | 3.475 | 1 | .062 | .857 |
| Nutritional level | -.140 | .285 | .241 | 1 | .624 | 1.150 |
| Presence of non - | .131 | .297 | .193 | 1 | .661 | 1.139 |
| Brand | .725 | .392 | 3.427 | 1 | .064 | 2.065 |
| Package | .559 | .410 | 1.864 | 1 | .072 | 1.750 |
| Constant | 2.045 | 2.081 | .966 | 1 | .326 | 7.731 |

## 4. Conclusions

The estimated model was statistically significant with the chi –square =43.080 p<0.001 and df =8. Factors affected to the consumption of confectionery foods were gender, taste, age, package and brand. Factors nutrient content, probability of getting non-communicable diseases and income level did not affect the consumption of confectionery foods. Participants preferred consuming international brands such as Ferrero Roccher, Pringles and Mars, than the local brands. The respondents demonstrated more willingness to consume chocolate products than biscuits and candies. With the current trend of youth moving into healthy food habits, an island wide survey on the same subject area would be beneficial for the Sri-Lankan confectionery manufacturers.

## 5. References

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