

Factors influencing fresh milk consumption and consumer's buying decision

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1. Introduction

Milk is considered a balanced food source containing various nutrients such as calcium, protein, phosphorus, and vitamins. Therefore, consuming milk and milk products is a good habit for humans at every stage of their life (Unal & Besler, 2006). The Sri Lankan dairy sector experienced an unstable period in 2013, after detecting DCD in imported milk powder. Consumer purchasing behavior, attitudes, requirements, wants, and demand for milk products had all been affected significantly. (Vidanapathirana, Rambukwella, & Priyankara, 2017). To cater to the changing needs, it is important to be aware of what factors affect consumer buying decisions. Several studies have interpreted that various factors such as socio-economic factors including consumer's age, gender education, occupational status, and ethnicity affect the food selection behavior of the consumers (Wham & Worsley, 2003). The study of (Kumar & Babu, 2014) in Pondicherry state reveals product quality, availability, pricing, and advertisement were the top factors given by the consumers of fresh milk. In the Sri Lankan context, (De Alwis, Edirisinghe, & Athauda, 2011) revealed; taste, nutrition, age, ethnic group, availability, health, price, household income, and size were factors that affected consumers' purchasing decisions. Lack of availability, accessibility, and quality of local fresh milk and milk-based products are the main reasons for consumers to buy more imported powdered milk and other dairy products, among Sri Lankan consumers (Vidanapathirana, Rambukwella, & Priyankara, 2017). Therefore, this research concentrates on studying how consumers' demographic, social and psychological factors affect consumers' purchasing decisions of fresh milk as the main objectives.

2. Materials and Methods

The research targets the individuals who would be in charge of purchasing food products for households in the Mawanella area, who might or might not purchase fresh milk. The research area is a suburb of Kegalle in the Kegalle district. The sample size was limited to 100 since the study is not a general consumer study. Respondents were randomly selected relevant to the sample frame. Data collection was done through a questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample of 100 respondents as self-administrated questionnaires through preparing google forms. No field surveys were carried out due to the covid-19 pandemic situation. Questionnaires were created using open-ended and closed-ended questions related to the set objectives. The complete questionnaire included a total of 3 sections. Section 01, data were collected regarding the respondents' demographic characteristics about their buying- decision towards fresh milk. In section 02, information about consumers' social and consumers' psychological characteristics was included in section 03. Collected data analyzed through SPSS software. To attain major objectives many statistical approaches were used. Frequency tables and percentages of descriptive data were used as one of the statistical analysis methods to analyze the collected sample data. The binary logistic regression analysis method was used to find out the respective relationships between the decision to purchase fresh milk

(dependent variable) and the independent variables which included the respondent’s characteristics that affect for purchase decision of fresh milk.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study for psychological factors show a positive significant (at the 0.05 level) relationship between consumers’ purchase decisions, perception towards health factors, and the nice smell of fresh milk when purchasing fresh milk. Results indicate that increased perception about health benefits can increase the consumption of fresh milk. Furthermore, it shows that consumers have high motivation to purchase fresh milk if the fresh milk smell is nice.

Table 01. Results of the binary logistic regression of the factors affecting consumers’ buying decision

Variable	Significance Coefficients	
		Psychological factors
Health benefits	0.069	2.222
Price reduction	0.067	1.124
Health condition	0.023	1.465
Taste	0.298	-.691
Nice smell	0.006	1.567
Availability near home	0.682	.216
Advertising	0.789	-.165

Research findings indicate that consumers’ motivational factors such as the health condition of the consumers when purchasing fresh milk and reduction of the price of fresh milk are positively and significantly affect (at the 0.05 level) the buying decision towards fresh milk consumption. The findings demonstrate that lowering the price of fresh milk can encourage people to buy more of it, implying that the likelihood of fresh milk consumption is increasing. Furthermore, consumers’ overall health is linked to a higher likelihood of drinking fresh milk. Findings revealed that greater availability or convenience is a significant element that influences consumer purchasing decisions for fresh milk. We can interpret that the health benefits of fresh milk, a price reduction for fresh milk, the nice smell of fresh milk, and the consumers’ health status have a positive significant impact on the fresh milk purchasing choice.

Results identified that Taste of Fresh Milk and availability near home is correspondingly has a positive impact on a fresh milk purchasing decision. Even though these factors are not significant. Similarly, there is a not significant but negative relationship between advertising and fresh milk consumption. Thus, advertising does not play a positive role in changing purchasing habits of the respondents.

The descriptive analysis shows, most consumers among respondents were female, indicating 60.6%. The respondent’s ages range between 18 years and 67 years old people. The majority of them have completed secondary (89.9%) and graduate level (9.1%) education. Most of the consumers were employed, indicating 93.9% of the total respondents. A high proportion of the respondents were married, which indicates 64.6% of the total responses. Thus, the results interpret that implementing strategies to improve fresh milk consumption in the local market will be more successful if they focus on female consumers who are between 18 and 67 years old, employed, married, and completed at least their secondary education.

Research interprets that, majority of consumers’ household composition ranged from 2 to 8, from that most of them were consisted of 4 to 5 family members. Indicates 31.3% and 28.3% respectively. In these families, there were children aged below 6 years in some families. 16.2%

of families had one child and 13.1% of families had 2 children below 6 years of age. 45.4% of the families had elders above 65 years. From that, 21.2% of families had only one elderly person and 22.2% of families had 2 elderly persons. Finally, the results indicate that families with 4 to 5 members and have children and elderly persons in their households are more tend to consume fresh milk with a high percentage.

4. Conclusions

Findings of this research conclude milk producers and processors should focus on female consumers aged between 18 and 67 years, employed, married, educated (secondary education), families with 4 to 5 members with children and elderly persons, health conditions of the consumers, a price reduction, health benefits gained from fresh milk, Availability, nice smell, and taste. When implementing strategies to improve fresh milk consumption. As a policy implementation, the government can introduce educational programs to improve the awareness of the health benefits of fresh milk. Furthermore, the government can implement convenient locations of milk parlors and make good availability of fresh milk for fresh milk consumers.

5. References

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