

# **A Study of Factors Affecting Kids' Preferences regarding Confectionary Products**

Authors:

1. M.R.P.Singh

Reader, Haryana School of Business

Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology

Hisar (Haryana)

2. Tika Ram

Assistant Professor, Haryana School of Business

Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology

Hisar (Haryana)

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**Abstract:** There are plethoras of confectionary products available in the market. In such a scenario, determining formation of kids' preferences needs exploration. The age, at which an average kid starts buying confectionary products, liking for confectionary products, brand preference and effect of sales promotion activities on kids' preferences, after effects of consuming etc. have been included in the study. An attempt has also been made to show how preference for size of packing is affected by gender and age.

## **Introduction**

In 1950's confectionery industries was an unorganised market and added negligible to the growth of economy. In the era of 1990's with the globalisation of Indian economy, the growth of confectionery industry took a high peak and accelerated the growth of Indian economy. Food industry witnessed a 9 per cent annual growth and has a foreign investment 200 billion dollar up to 2006 and it expected to 315 billion dollar up to 2015.

Confectionery items are commonly consumed by our society. Confectionery items are generally used for taste and small hunger but the people or children should consume confectionery items in optimum quality because its excessive use can harm body like any other sweet and it should use as a snacks in little quantity. There are various types of confectionery items are available in market for research purpose we are taking here mainly five types of confectionery items i.e. candies, wafers, chips, chewing gum and chocolates. All of these five products are very much popular in our country. Some leading industries in the field of confectionery products are Cadbury, Nestle, Parle and Amul.

Enhancing the base of customer of children in the age group of 5 to 12 years, industry observed a healthy competition between foreign market players like Cadbury, Nestle and Indian players like Parle and Nutrine with the need to grow in expenditure of

advertisement confectionery industry observed a decline in the share of non-branded products. Children today are extremely aware of the various brands in the market and are conscious of the products they use or consume. They pick and choose carefully according to their needs, style, preferences etc. They also exercise a lot of independence in decision-making and influence the family buying behaviour. Today's kids are well informed, better than their parents. This is because virtually from birth today's children are exposed to TV commercials, banner ads, billboards, logos and product promotions.

## **Review of Literature**

Halan (2002) and Singh (1998) have pointed out that children constitute a major consumer market, with direct purchasing power for snacks and sweets, and indirect purchase influence while shopping. Ahuja et al. (1993) have found that in western countries, children have reported to wield a lot of influence in purchase decisions for children products such as snacks. Mehrotra et al. (1977) have noted that no particular attitude or set of attitude can be applied for all products. Confectionery purchases are affected due to festival seasons (The confectioner-2006 issue by Jey zemke). John (1999) classified consumer socialization stages of children as being the perceptual stage (3-7 years), the analytical stage (7-11 years), and the reflective stage (11-16 years). According to Seiter (1993), the most common persuasive strategy employed in advertising to children is to associate the product with fun and happiness, rather than to provide any factual product-related information. Kelly et al. (2002) have shown that among 12-16-year-old, brand attitude is a mediator between attitude towards an advertisement and attitude towards a product category.

## **Research Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature. The primary data has been collected from the respondents comprising of children in the age group of 8 to 10 years through well-designed and tested questionnaire. The questionnaires have been filled by the respondents in the presence of their parents which no doubt have supported the children in filling up the questionnaire. A sample of 200 respondents has been chosen from Hisar by using systematic random sampling technique. The main objective of the research was to find

the preference of children in the age group of 8 to 10 years, regarding various aspects of confectionary products. The secondary data has been collected from in various journals, magazines and Internet. The data has been analyzed through statistical measures like percentage, ranking and Chi-square methods. To test independence of preference for size of packing with Age and Gender, two hypotheses were formulated and tested.

## **Analysis**

### **Demographic profile of Respondents**

Out of total 200 respondents, male respondents were 120 (60 %) and female respondents were 80 (40 %). 102 (51 %) respondents were from the age group of 8 to 10 years and 98 (49%) respondents were from the age group of 10 to 12 years. In terms of parent income level, 32 (16 %) respondents, 85 (42.5%) respondents, 28 (14%) respondents and 55 (27.5 %) respondents were in the income group of below Rs. 10,000, Rs. 10,000-15000, Rs. 15,000-20,000, and above Rs. 20,000 respectively.

### **At which age respondents started buying**

Age as an important demographic variable is quite often used to segment and position the product in the market. In the context of confectionary products, it is important to know at what particular age children start buying these products.

**Table No. 1: At which age respondents started buying**

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
2	24	12
3	61	30.5
4	49	24.5
5	44	22
6	14	7
7	04	2
8	04	2

Source: Primary Data

The Table No.1 indicates that 24 (12%), 61 (30.5%), 49 (24.5%) and 44 (22%) respondents start buying confectionary products at an age of 2,3,4,5 years respectively. Taken together, the age group of 2 to 5 years includes 178 (89%) respondents thereby indicating that vast majority of children starts buying confectionary products in the age group of 2 to 5 years.

### **Brand Preference of Confectionery Products**

Consumers have varied preferences for local, national and international brands. Branding has strategic significance in marketing. Knowing brand preference can serve in designing branding strategies and taking decision whether company name should be attached with products or not.

**Table No. 2: Brand Preference of Confectionery Products**

Brands	Number of respondents	Percentage
Local	21	10.5
National	73	36.5
International	19	9.5
All	87	43.5

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 2 indicates that 87 (43.5%), 73 (36.5%) respondents exhibit preference for all, national brands respectively. Vast majority of respondents belong to all brands category, which is an indicative of mixed preference for all the brands. National brands clearly scores over both local and international brands.

### **Confectionery products liked most**

There are different types of confectionary products and all looks equally good in first instance. Knowing about the liking for various confectionary products can be informative for the companies in the sense that the companies can focus on one or two most liked products by the children.

**Table No. 3: Confectionery products liked most**

Confectionery product	Score	Rank
Wafers	418	1
Chewing gums	451	2
Candies	553	3
Chocolate	683	4
Chips	721	5

Source: Primary Data

On translating composite scores (Table No.3) into ranks (Least score is given Rank 1), it is observed that Wafers, Chewing Gums, Candies, Chocolate and Chips have got ranks 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. Wafers are the most liked whereas Chips are least liked among the types of confectionery products by the children.

#### **After effects of confectionery items**

Parents are particularly concerned about the after effects of using confectionery products. No doubt, most of the children find confectionery products very tasty and are also less concerned about after effects.

**Table No. 4: After effects of confectionery Products**

After effects	Number of respondents	Percentage
Teeth trouble	84	42
Obesity	19	9.5
No	97	48.5

Source: Primary Data

Table No.4 shows that 97 (48.5%) respondents do not consider after effects of consuming confectionery products for teeth trouble. Teeth trouble, no doubt is the most common after effect of confectionery products, has been acknowledged by 84 (42%) respondents. The obesity, as an after effect, has been accepted by 19 (9.5%) respondents.

### **Attracting factors while buying decision**

The product features play a significant role in affecting buying decisions. In context of confectionary products, six factors namely Shape, Taste, Colour, Brand, Packaging and Suitable Price have been considered for knowing their effect on buying decisions.

**Table No. 5: Effect of various factors on buying decision**

Factors	Score	Rank
Taste	476	1
Colour	545	2
Packaging	603	3
Brand	691	4
Suitable price	727	5
Shape	833	6

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from Table No.5 that the Taste with a lowest composite score of 476 has been given a rank of 1, followed by Colour with a composite score of 545 with a rank of 2. Shape with highest composite score of 833 has been given lowest rank of 6. It can be concluded that taste of confectionary products is considered as the most important factor affecting buying decision whereas shape is given least preference in buying decision. The factors in the ascending order of their importance in buying decisions are Taste, Colour, Packaging, Brand, Suitable Price and Shape of confectionary products.

### **Sales promotion**

Sales promotion activities are undertaken by the companies from time to time to give an impetus to sales. The sales promotion activities for confectionary products include Buy one get one, Discount, Extra Quantity, Free Gift and Scratch Coupon. The knowledge about the effectiveness of these schemes can help in identifying the most attractive sales promotion scheme.

**Table No. 6: Distribution on the basis of most attracting sales promotion scheme**

Schemes	Score	Rank
Free Gift	423	1
Buy One Get One	495	2
Scratch coupon	541	3
Extra quantity	611	4
Discount	732	5

Source: Primary Data

As evident from the Table No. 6 that Free Gift promotional scheme with a score of 423 is ranked 1, followed by Buy One Get One with a score of 495 ranked 2. Discount promotional scheme is least effective among kids scoring 732 with a rank of 5. The promotional schemes in ascending order of ranks from most preferred to least preferred are Free Gifts, Buy One Get One, Scratch coupon, Extra quantity and Discount.

#### **Age-wise Preference of Kids for Size of Packing**

Confectionary products are offered in three packs namely Economy, Family and Small pack. To explore the age-wise preference of kids for size of packing, hypothesis was formulated as under:

Ho: Size of packing is independent of age

Ha: Size of packing is not independent of age

**Table No. 7: Age-wise Preference of Kids for Size of Packing**

		Size of Packing			Total
		Economy Pack	Family Pack	Small Pack	
Age (Years)	8- 10	14	41	47	102
	10 -12	19	19	60	98
	Total	33	60	107	200

Source: Primary Data

(Chi-square= 8.1847, D.O.F.=2, p-value=0.0167)



The age-wise preference of kids for size of packing has been found significant at 0.0167 thereby indicating that preference for size of packing is not independent of age.

### **Preference of Male and Female for Size of Packing**

To explore Gender preference for size of packing, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Ho: Size of packing is independent of Gender

Ha: Size of packing is not independent of Gender

**Table No. 8: Preference of Male and Female for Size of Packing**

		Size of Packing			Total
		Economy Pack	Family Pack	Small Pack	
Gender	Male	20	44	56	120
	Female	13	16	51	80
	Total	33	60	107	200

Source: Primary Data

(Chi-square=7.067872, D.O.F.=2, p-value=0.02919)

The Preference of Male and Female for Size of Packing is significant at 0.02919. Hence the preference for size of packing is not independent of gender.

### **Findings**

- In the age group of 2 to 5 years, vast majority (89%) of children starts buying confectionary products in the age group of 2 to 5 years.
- Approximately 43 per cent respondents have preference for all brands of confectionaries, which is an indicative of the fact that children are fewer brands conscious.
- National brands of confectionaries are way ahead of both local and international brands.
- Wafers are the most liked whereas Chips are least liked among the types of confectionary products by the children.

- About 48 per cent respondents do not consider after effects of consuming confectionary products seriously.
- Teeth trouble, as an after effect of consuming confectionary products, has been acknowledged by (42%) respondents.
- The factors in the ascending order of their importance in buying decisions are Taste, Colour, Packaging, Brand, Suitable Price and Shape of confectionary products.
- The promotional schemes in ascending order of ranks from most preferred to least preferred are Free Gifts, Buy One Get One, Scratch coupon, Extra quantity and Discount.
- The preference for size of packing is not independent of age.
- The preference for size of packing is not independent of gender.

## **Conclusion**

Majority of kids start buying confectionary products below 5 years of age. They are less concerned about international brands of confectionary products. National brands are patronized and wafers are most liked by kids. Teeth trouble is the most acknowledged after effect of consuming confectionary products. Free Gifts has been found the most effective sales promotion tool for them. Taste and Shape of confectionary products are the most and least preferred respectively in their buying decisions.

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