



Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behavior of Confectionery Products of Domestic Enterprises: An Empirical Study in Hanoi

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Abstract. For decades, consumer buying behavior has drawn the interest of many researchers. This study reviews theory and previous studies to systematize the theoretical basis for analyzing the factors influencing consumer buying behavior of domestic confectionery products in Hanoi. Research findings show that there are 5 factors affecting the consumer buying behavior of domestic confectionery products, which are packaging, price, customer service, product quality, and place. Among that the packaging factor has the greatest influence and the place factor has the least influence on buying behavior. Based on research findings, several recommendations on increasing the consumption of confectionery products in Vietnam, in general and in Hanoi, in particular, are provided.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Behavior · Confectionery · Packaging · Product Quality · Place · Customer Service · Price

1 Introduction

From a marketing perspective, customers make up the market [15]. Paralleling to study the geographical aspect of the market, marketing researchers focus on understanding the types of customers along with their views, tastes, attitudes, and reactions, as well as considering their purchasing decision process [6, 40]. The most important aspect of customer research is motivational research, which involves an in-depth analysis of buyers' thoughts and attitudes to uncover the underlying reasons that motivate buyers to purchase certain products and specific brands [14, 16]. Companies must constantly focus on the consumption behavior of customers to improve customer satisfaction when they consume the products. Understanding consumer buying behavior in the market is very important for traders and marketers of food products [25]. The theory of consumer behavior is constantly being researched and developed by scientists around the world to better suit each actual condition.

Customers are the goal that businesses aim at in the process of the profit-making. In Vietnam, to strengthen the sales volume, companies need to develop marketing strategies as well as develop products to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the customer

[8, 24, 29]. Especially, the confectionery market in Vietnam is a fiercely competitive market for domestic and imported products recently. In the past two years, the growth rate of Vietnam's confectionery industry has reached about 8–10%, instead of 15–20% in the period 2010–2015 [11]. Vietnam's total confectionery output in 2020 is expected to reach more than 200,000 tons and revenue is estimated at more than VND40,000 billion, revenue and output show signs of slowing down due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic. Although the market is very large, the current leading company Kinhdo-Mondelez only accounts for 20% of the market share, the next unit is Bibica, Friendship accounts for about 14–15%. In general, the market share of branded companies in Vietnam is only 42%, the rests are foreign companies and other small importers and manufacturers [35]. Manufacturers try to find ways to increase the utility value as well as the perceived value that the product brings, and thereby try to find ways to reduce costs to improve competitiveness while still ensuring high profit [23]. Due to the influence of the epidemic, the trend of consumers is to tighten spending, domestic confectionery enterprises grasp the consumption behavior of customers to improve their competitiveness. Along with changing product formulas, changing advertising messages, and changing designs, packaging is also one of the important solutions used by manufacturers. Manufacturers need to have the right marketing policy to offer products that have a place in the minds of customers.

The main objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting consumer buying behavior towards domestic confectionery products and provide recommendations to improve the consumption of confectionery products for Vietnamese companies. Due to the characteristics of large confectionery enterprises concentrated in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, this research focuses on studying consumer buying behavior in Hanoi.

2 Literature Review

Consumer buying behavior is influenced by internal and external factors. Factors affecting their buying motivation such as personal needs, attitudes, personality, and motivation to the brands belong to psychological characteristics and individual consumer characteristics (Kotler & Keller [16]). Several studies have shown the importance of external environmental factors in influencing consumers buying behavior [7, 9, 18, 30, 34]. Previous studies have shown that purchase intention determines consumer buying behavior [33].

Studying consumer buying behavior is very important and meaningful in practice for Vietnamese companies in the international economic integration. The main reason is that different consumers have different behaviors in each specific case and situation. Each consumer has different needs, lifestyles, and goals. Changes in consumer buying behavior can be different due to the changing needs and want of people and cultures between localities. A person's behavior or consumer buying behavior can also change over time, due to life fluctuations such as income, employment, and social relationships [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to have empirical research to verify the impact levels and the explanatory ability of the factors on the consumption behavior of Vietnamese confectionery products. The research on Vietnamese consumer buying behavior towards domestic confectionery products is the basis for companies to have the right business

strategies and wise marketing policies to meet the needs of Vietnamese consumers. There are many studies on the factors affecting the buying behavior of customers (see Table 1). However, there have not been many studies on the buying behavior of domestic confectionery products in Vietnam.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Hypothesis

Based on reviewing the previous research papers [20, 22, 28], especially the behavioral theories, Philip Kotler's behavioral model and McCarthy's 4P theory [21], the authors propose a research model to study the factors affecting the consumption behavior of confectionery products including 6 independent variables: (1) Product Quality, (2) Trust, (3) Place, (4) Price, (5) Packaging, (6) Customer Service and the dependent variable is (7) Consumer buying Behavior. Factors (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) have a direct impact on variables (7). The research model and the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable are shown in Fig. 1.

This study proposes 6 hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 to identify the relationships between factors in consumer buying behavior of domestic confectionery products.

Kotler believes that goods and services must satisfy customers in terms of quality. Product quality is a factor that directly affects consumer behavior. That means consumers always choose products of good quality [19]. Especially with food items such as confectionery, product quality is becoming more and more concerned by the consumer because it directly affects consumer health. Perceived quality is a strong influence on food purchase intention [33, 41]. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed.

H1: The better the product quality, the easier for consumers to make decisions about consuming domestic confectionery products

According to Kotler, trust is one of the five psychological factors affecting consumer behavior. Marketers believe that customer trust creates prestige for products and brands, so it affects consumer behavior [19, 26]. It can be seen that consumers easily make purchasing decisions when they have confidence in the product. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is specified as follows:

H2: The more trust of customers in domestic confectionery products, the more products they buy

According to McCarthy's 4P theory, "place" is understood to represent the places where a product can be purchased, including all activities aimed at bringing the product to the target consumers. "Place" can include any traditional stores as well as virtual internet stores as long as it provides access to the consumer to purchase the product. Convenience in the buying process is a major contributor to customers' consumption behavior [3, 27]. Some studies also show that "place" is the most important issue in the model [37]. Moreover, for consumers of Vietnam in general and Hanoi in particular,

when consumption habits through traditional channels play a dominant role, the stores need to be researched and evaluated even more. As a result, the hypothesis H3 is proposed as follows:

H3: The more convenient the shopping place is, the more products customers consume

According to McCarthy's 4P, price is the cost a customer has to pay in exchange for a supplier's product or service. According to many studies, the price has a strong impact on consumption, and the factor behind price is the income of consumers [15, 36]. Discounts on goods, promotions, bulk purchases, or exchange of products for cheaper products are noted [15, 29]. Price is a factor considered in many studies of consumer behavior towards food [9, 32, 39]. Price is an important factor affecting food purchase intention and behavior [3, 12, 26–28, 36, 37]. Based on that, the hypothesis H4 is stated as follows:

H4: The lower the price of domestic confectionery products is, the more products consumers buy

Each type of product has its type of packaging. Packaging not only represents a protective function but also gives consumers information about the product and the manufacturer. It can be said that the product packaging and packaging factors influence consumers' purchasing decisions [3]. In the research [1, 5] have concluded that packaging is one of the most important and powerful factors influencing consumers purchasing decisions. Therefore, hypothesis H5 is proposed as follows:

H5: The more careful and beautiful the packaging of domestic confectionery products is, the more products consumers consume.

Besides focusing on product quality, improving customer service is considered the key to attracting potential customers and retaining loyal customers of the business [3, 10]. When customers experience good service and care, it increases their perceived value of customers [27]. Good feelings will positively affect their consumption behavior in the next purchase. Hypothesis H6 is stated as follows:

H6: The better the customer service quality is, the more products customers consume.

In addition, previous studies recognized the influence of demographic factors including the consumer's income, education level, age, and gender on customers' choice behavior for different foods [13, 25, 31, 33, 39].

3.2 Data Collection and Research Methods

The research used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected through the company's reports, General Statistical Office, etc. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was built from reference to

previous studies and based on the author's understanding of the consumer market in Vietnam. The questionnaire consists of three main parts as follows:

Part 1: Personal information of consumers: this information was used to exploit demographic variables in the research model. The questions are given in the form of choices, so it is easy and convenient for them to answer the questionnaire.

Part 2: Research on consumer consumption habits of domestic confectionery includes 18 questions (18 observed variables). This section has been developed to provide an overview of the consumption behavior of consumers in Hanoi and provide useful information for later comparison and descriptive statistics.

Part 3: Going into depth to understand the factors affecting the consumption behavior of confectionery products in the country as stated by the authors in the research model section. The questions are designed on a 5-point Likert scale.

The authors went directly to some stores of the domestic confectionery company in Hanoi to gather data from customers who consumed the product from September 2020 to February 2021. This is the time of the largest sale of confectionery in a year. The number of questionnaires distributed was 407. After the investigation process, the author collected 371 questionnaires, removed 15 questionnaires with major errors, and obtained 356 valid copies, corresponding to a sample size of 356, the collection rate reached 87.4%. The sample size of 356 is acceptable for this research according to the Rule of Thumb. The scale to conduct the survey is a 5-point Likert scale, and at the same time, test the reliability of each scale. The author used the statistical software SPSS 20.0 to test the reliability of the scale (Cronbach alpha), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and regression analysis. The data processing process includes data cleaning and encryption, the reliability of the scale, and regression analysis.

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Samples

Most of the respondents are male occupying about 74% and females occupying 26%. The respondents aged from 25 to under 40 account for the biggest share of 37.9% then to age under 25 (35.1%). The consumers who "have 2 children" in the family occupy 38.7%, followed by the consumers who "have a no child" occupy 28.4%, and who "have 1 child" are account for 25%. The consumers who have a frequency of purchases "when in need" account for the largest share of 87.6%, followed by consumers who have a purchasing frequency "once a week" account for 8.1%; then "2–3 times per week" account for only 4.3%. Related to the spending amount for one purchase, the respondents with an amount of "less than VND100,000" (about 4.3 USD) account for 49.2% then "from VND100,000 to VND200,000" account for 38.3% (see Table 2).

4.2 Factors Affecting Consumers' Behavior Toward Domestic Confectionery Product

4.2.1 The Reliability Coefficient of the Scale

Table 3 shows the reliability of 6 variables of the research model. All variables meet the requirement of reliability with the Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.6 . The Price variable has the highest value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.864 followed by the Packaging variable (0.851), and the product quality has a reliability of 0.623 (>0.6).

4.2.2 Factor Analysis (EFA)

To identify which factor in the research model has an impact on consumer buying behavior for domestic confectionery products in Vietnam, the EFA analysis is applied in this research.

4.2.3 Analysis of Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior

The research model proposed 6 factors (corresponding to 18 observed variables) that are assumed to influence the consumption behavior of customers. However, after conducting a reliability test, 4 observed variables: Product quality1, Place2, Price3, and Customer Service3 were removed because the Cronbach Alpha index of the variable type is larger than the general Cronbach Alpha index of the scale. After removing the above 4 variables, the official scale is left with 14 observed variables. Applying the rotated factor analysis method, the results show that all 14 variables are significant (Cronbach Alpha value > 0.6) (see Table 4).

The analysis results show that, there are 5 significant factors with total variance extracted = 74.5% $> 50\%$. Considering the KMO value = 0.768 > 0.5 , factor analysis is suitable. The new factors include its inherent observables and other factors' observables are renamed as (1) A Packaging, (2) A Price, (3) A Service, (4) A Quality, (5) A Place.

In addition, results show that the "Product quality" scale in the originally proposed research model has been combined with the "Trust" scale. There is a consensus between these two contents of consumers. For consumers, "Product quality" creates "Trust" with products. The new research hypothesis is provided as follows (Tables 5 and 6):

- a. H1: The more careful and beautiful packaging of domestic confectionery products is, the more products consumers consume
- b. H2: The better the product quality is, the easier it is for consumers to make decisions on consuming domestic confectionery products
- c. H3: The better the customer service quality of the domestic confectionery company is, the more products consumers consume
- d. H4: The lower the price of domestic confectionery products is, the more products consumers consume
- e. H5: The more convenient the shopping location is, the more products consumers consume

4.3 Regression Analysis

In the adjusted research model, the consumption dependent variable is affected by 5 variables: product quality, packaging, customer service, price, and place. To identify the factors influencing on consumer behavior toward domestic confectionery products, the study uses the multiple linear regression method. The regression equation is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Consumer Behavior} = & b_0 + b_1 * \text{APackaging} + b_2 * \text{AQuality} \\ & + b_3 * \text{AService} + b_4 * \text{APrice} + b_5 * \text{APlace} \end{aligned}$$

The model summary and the results of regression analysis are shown in Tables 7 and 8.

Comparing two values of R² (R Square = 0.623) and R² adjusted (Adjusted R Square = 0.598), the adjusted R² is smaller than R². Therefore, it is safer to use adjusted R² to evaluate the model fit because it does not exaggerate the fit of the model. The independent variables explain 59.8% of the change in the dependent variable. In addition, R² > 0.4 and standard error (Std. Error of the Estimation) are satisfactory. The F-statistic with a very small significance level (sig = 0.00) shows that the multiple linear regression model fits the data set and can be used.

Table 9 shows the results of regression analysis on the influence of factors on consumer buying behavior for domestic confectionery products. Findings show that the variables APacking, APrice, AService, AQuality, APlace all have significance Sig < 0.05. These variables are all statistically significant, which means that the increase or decrease in the value of the variables changes consumer behavior.

All hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted which adjust the direction of the impact of price on consumption behavior in H4. The factors of “Packaging”, “Product quality”, “Price”, “Customer service” and “Place” all have a positive impact on consumer behavior toward domestic confectionery products. In which the “Place” factor affects less than other factors.

The regression results show that the price factor has a positive effect on the consumption behavior of customers, which means that when the price increases, consumers will consume more. This, although contrary to hypothesis H4 and contrary to the relationship between price and consumer demand, is explained by consumers’ actual view of the relationship between price and product quality. Today, consumers believe that the cheaper the goods, the worse the product quality, especially for food items because it directly affects their health. Therefore, consumers are willing to spend a higher amount of money to buy goods with the expectation that a high price comes with good quality. In this case, the price factor does not play an important role in choosing to buy a product.

Results of the regression analysis show that the independent variables APackaging, AQuality, AService, APrice, and APlace were all statistically significant (sig < 0.05) and there was no multicollinearity (VIF < 2). Among the 5 factors affecting consumer behavior on domestic confectionery products, the greatest influence factor is “APacking” with Beta = 0.505, followed by the factor “Product quality” with Beta = 0.293, the factor “Price” has Beta = 0.209, “Service” with Beta = 0.189 and finally “Place” with Beta = 0.123.

The regression equation for factors affecting consumer buying behavior for domestic confectionery products is shown as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Consumer buying Behavior} = & -0.802 + 0.505 * APackaging + 0.293 * AQuality \\ & + 0.189 * AService + 0.209 * APrice + 0.123 * APlace \end{aligned}$$

5 Conclusions and Suggestions

Over the past several decades, consumer buying behavior research has varied in fields and scope. The study synthesizes behavioral theory models such as TPB, and Kotler's consumer behavior model. These models have been applied by many researchers around the world and tried to be developed to become more suitable to the actual conditions, each field, each industry, including food in general, and confectionery products in particular. These behavioral theories are the basis to support and refer to research on the consumption behavior of domestic confectionery products in Vietnam.

In this study, the results of empirical research show that consumers prefer to buy domestic confectionery products when they ensure quality, hygiene, and safety, beautiful packaging with full product information, reasonable prices, and good customer service. To improve production efficiency and increase sales for domestic confectionery companies, several recommendations for product quality, packaging, services, and place are proposed as follows:

Companies should perform well the factors of PQCDMS: P – Productivity: Improve labor productivity; Q – Quality: Improve product quality; C – Cost: Reduce production costs; D – Delivery: Delivery on time; S – Safety: Ensure the safety of employees; M – Morale: Raise work morale.

Improving the quality of products is one of the measures to attract customers and expand the market. On the other hand, the company should invest in the research and development department to bring to market new types of confectionery products with unique and novel flavors, provide new product lines for dieters, lower sugar, lower cholesterol.

Product packaging must be designed to be simple, clear, and truthful, especially for dry goods. The colors and images on the packaging, in addition to having to carry the company's brand features, need to be different and eye-catching on special occasions in Vietnam: Children's Day 1/6, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Lunar New Year et al.,. Another point to note is that the packaging design should be practical and convenient, for example, with packaged candies, the company can design more plastic zippers on the candy packaging so that consumers can easily store the rest after being peeled. Or for cake boxes containing birthday cakes, the handle should be redesigned so that when customers carry the box, avoid the maximum of the cake being bumped and distorted during the moving process. Convenience will promote consumers to love the product more.

Packaging materials must show the high-class positioning of the product, suitable for each type of product, and ensure standards such as non-toxic, moisture-proof, mold-proof, anti-oxidation, etc. Currently, the overuse of plastic for product packaging is causing serious problems of environmental pollution, so the Companies may consider changing the packaging material from plastic to paper for dry goods such as bread, cakes, sweets, etc. In addition, paper bags can be used more times than plastic bags, the fact that customers can reuse the company's bags will make customers remember and return to buy higher. That is why paper box printing is very important.

Sales staff need to be meticulous in their style from costumes, professional and attentive service style, considerate attitude. Regularly investigate and collect customer feedback to improve customer service. Instead of asking the customer to write the survey form, wasting the customer's time, put a tablet computer so that the customer can directly collect the online survey form. This also helps businesses collect customer data, which is convenient for marketing later.

In the context of the Covid 19 pandemic, and the development of e-commerce, like other restaurants and food brands, confectionery companies can sell goods on apps such as Grab, Now, Baenim,... or build a team of staff to take care of the website and Facebook fan page to sell online right on their existing application platform. In addition, the companies can link up with hotels, airports, coffee shops for office workers... to set up stores and distribute their products. This will certainly help the company to easily and quickly expand the market and maximize sales profit.

In the complicated situation of the Covid 19 pandemic, there are some solutions that may not be immediately implemented. However, this is also an opportunity for the companies to strengthen their internal training for middle management, line management, and workers. Good employee training is one of the important factors in the long-term development strategy of the company. Employees are the ones who implement strategies whether short-term or long-term. Therefore, the quality of training will affect the target results achieved by both employees and businesses.

6 Limitations

Due to the time constraint, this study only investigated a small sample size and the R-squared coefficient was still relatively low. This will be the foundation as well as suggestions for further studies to expand the surveyed subjects, and at the same time add new factors to the model to increase the explanatory level of the factors, thereby suggesting more practical solutions.

Appendix

Table 1. Research on factors affecting customer buying behavior

Authors	Subject	Factors influencing consumer buying behavior
Ajzen [2]	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude factor • Social influence factors • Behavioral control factors
Kotler [17]	Consumer behavior model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing mix elements (product quality, price, distribution, and trade promotion) • Other factors (economic, technological, social, cultural)
Ali et al. [3]	Consumer purchasing behavior for food products in an emerging economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, fresh food • Price • Quality • Diversity • Packaging • Convenience in shopping • Additional services
Thuan et al. [27]	Safe vegetable consumption behavior in Can Tho City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prestige distributor • Quality • Convenient shopping • Price • Service attitude
Nguyen and Gizaw [28]	Factors affecting consumer decision to buy food products with their brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price • Quality • Trademark
Jafersadhiq [12]	Buying behavior of instant food products at Coimbatore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional manufacturing process • Product availability
Duy [38]	Factors affecting the consumption of Soc Trang pia cake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price • Product information • Food safety • The convenience of the product • Product quality
Linh [37]	Consumers' decision to buy foreign coffee in Ho Chi Minh City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price • Quality • Place • Promotion • Income
Suong et al. [26]	Consumer buying behavior of functional foods in Ho Chi Minh City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude • Knowledge • Trust • Price

Source: reviewed by authors

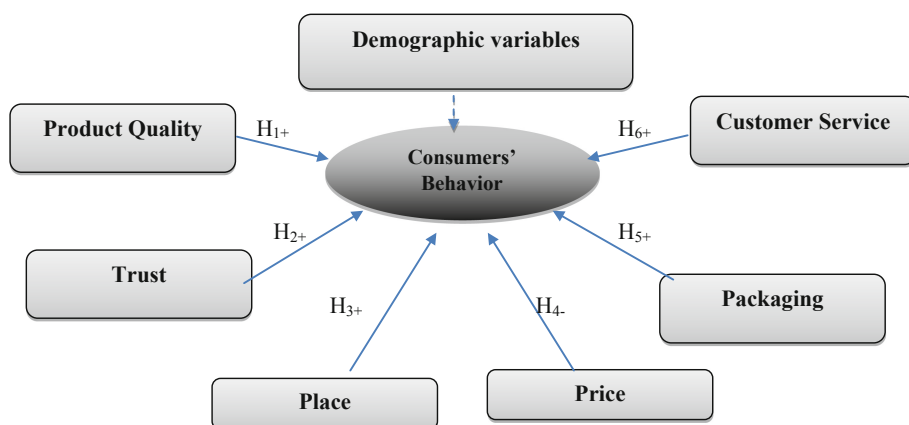


Fig. 1. Research Model on factors affecting consumer buying behavior of domestic confectionery products. *Source: Authors proposed*

Table 2. Respondents' Characteristics

Characteristics	Classification	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	93	26.1
	Female	263	73.9
Age	Under 25	125	35.1
	From 25 to under 40	136	37.9
	From 40 to under 55	69	19.4
	Over 55	26	7.6
Number of children in the family	0	101	28.4
	1	89	25
	2	138	38.7
	3	28	7.9
Income	Under 5 million VND	72	20
	From 5 million to under 10 million VND	166	46.7
	From 10 Million VND to 25 million VND	103	29
	From 25 million VND and over	15	4.3
Frequency of purchases	When in need	312	87.6
	Once a week	29	8.1
	2-3 times a week	15	4.3

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Characteristics	Classification	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Level of spending for 1 purchase	Under < 100.000 VND	217	49.2
	From 100.000 to 200.000 VND	92	38.3
	>200.000 VNĐ	47	12.5

Source: research findings

Table 3. Reliability of the scale

#	Factors	Number of variables	Cronbach's alpha
1	Product quality	3	0.623
2	Trust	3	0.810
3	Place	3	0.617
4	Price	3	0.864
5	Packaging	3	0.851
6	Customer service	3	0.675

Source: research findings

Table 4. Rotated matrix of factors affecting consumer buying behavior

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Packaging1	.845				
Packaging3	.796				
Packaging2	.790				
Product quality2		.701			
Product quality3		.694			
Trust1		.653			
Trust3		.641			
Trust2		.632			
Customer service2			.866		
Customer service1			.803		

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Price2				.876	
Price1				.845	
Place1					.800
Place3					.745

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

^aRotation converged in 14 iterations.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.768
	Approx. Chi-Square	826.174
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	91
	Sig.	.000

Table 6. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of new components

#	Extraction factor	Number of variables	Cronbach's Alpha
1	APackaging	3	0.854
2	AQuality	5	0.791
3	AService	2	0.864
4	APrice	2	0.875
5	APlace	2	0.632

Table 7. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.784 ^a	.623	.598	.44251

^aPredictors: (Constant), APlace, APackaging, APrice, AQuality, AService

Table 8. ANOVA

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.897	5	6.982	35.831	.000 ^b
	Residual	22.216	114	.195		
	Total	57.123	119			

^aDependent Variable: Consumer Behavior

^bPredictors: (Constant), APacking, APrice, AService, AQuality, APlace.

Table 9. Results of regression analysis of factors affecting consumer buying behavior for domestic confectionery products

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.802	.407		-1.979	.050		
	APacking	.505	.083	.459	6.112	.000	.611	1.683
	AQuality	.293	.112	.196	2.592	.011	.604	1.656
	AService	.189	.084	.154	2.260	.025	.744	1.344
	APrice	.209	.083	.172	2.532	.013	.742	1.347
	APlace	.123	.034	.097	1.838	.044	.522	1.268

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