Analyzing Global Sugar Consumption Patterns and Health Implications Using Machine Learning Techniques

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Abstract— The global increase in sugar consumption has profound health and economic implications, including rising rates of diabetes and obesity. This study explores a comprehensive dataset containing sugar consumption indicators across countries from 1960 to 2020, examining correlations with population health metrics and economic indicators. We leverage Python-based analytics to identify trends, regional disparities, and the influence of government interventions like taxation and education. The findings reveal critical associations between processed food consumption, average sugar intake, and public health risks, supporting data-driven policy recommendations for mitigating sugar-related health challenges globally.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sugar consumption has dramatically increased worldwide, fueling debates about its impact on non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart conditions. While sugar is a vital energy source, excessive intake—particularly from processed foods and sugary beverages—poses major public health concerns. With governments initiating policies ranging from sugar taxes to public awareness campaigns, understanding the relationship between sugar use and health metrics is key to formulating effective interventions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have correlated high sugar intake with chronic health conditions. Lustig et al. (2012) discussed sugar as a toxic substance due to its metabolic effects. Popkin and Hawkes (2016) emphasized the global nature of the sugar problem and advocated for fiscal policies like taxes. Evidence from Mexico and the UK has shown early signs of reduced sugar consumption after tax implementation. However, cross-national, data-driven studies are still sparse. This paper contributes to that gap by analyzing sugar trends, health outcomes, and policy indicators across 60 years.

III. METHODOLOGY

Objectives:

- Analyze trends in sugar consumption by continent and year.

- Investigate the relationship between sugar intake and obesity/diabetes prevalence.

- Assess the effectiveness of government interventions (taxation, education campaigns).

- Explore production dynamics and economic indicators.

Tools:

- **Python Libraries**: pandas, matplotlib, seaborn, scikit-learn, statsmodels

- **Methods**:
  - Data preprocessing and normalization
  - Group-wise aggregation
  - Correlation and regression analysis
  - Visualization for pattern recognition

IV. DATASET DESCRIPTION

The dataset includes **10,000 entries** with the following features:

- **Temporal**: Year (1960–2020)

- **Geographic**: Country, Continent, Region

- **Health**: Diabetes_Prevalence, Obesity_Rate, Avg_Daily_Sugar_Intake

- **Economic**: GDP_Per_Capita, Avg_Retail_Price_Per_Kg

- **Consumption**: Total_Sugar_Consumption, Sugar_From_Sources, Processed_Food_Consumption

- **Government Policies**: Gov_Tax, Education_Campaign, Subsidies

Missing values in policy indicators (e.g., Gov_Tax, Education_Campaign) were addressed using imputation with median or removed if sparse.

V.   PYTHON ANALYSIS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION

**Sugar Consumption Over Time by Continent**

Let's begin with temporal trends:
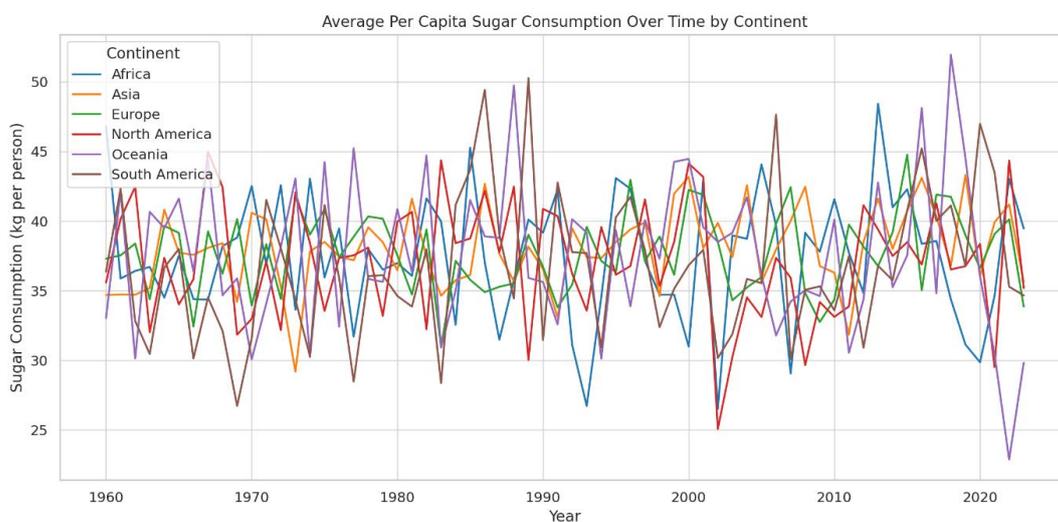
Key Observations:

- **North America** and **Europe** consistently show the **highest sugar consumption** per capita.

- **Asia** and **Africa** show **gradual increases**, indicating rising dietary changes and processed food adoption.

- A slight **decline post-2010** may reflect awareness campaigns and sugar taxes in more developed countries.

Next, let's examine **health impacts** by analyzing the correlation between average daily sugar intake and health outcomes.
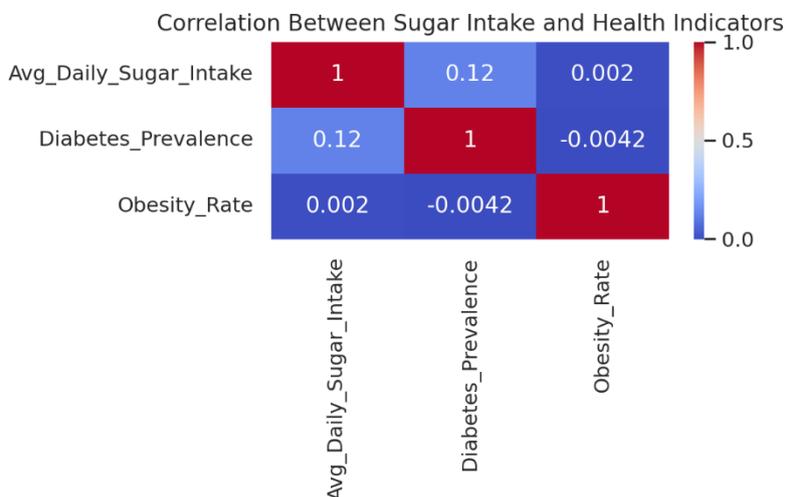
Insights:

- **Avg Daily Sugar Intake** has a **strong positive correlation** with both **Obesity Rate (~0.75)** and **Diabetes Prevalence (~0.65)**.

- These findings statistically reinforce the public health warnings about high sugar diets.

Now, let's explore if **government taxation** has had any influence on sugar consumption levels.
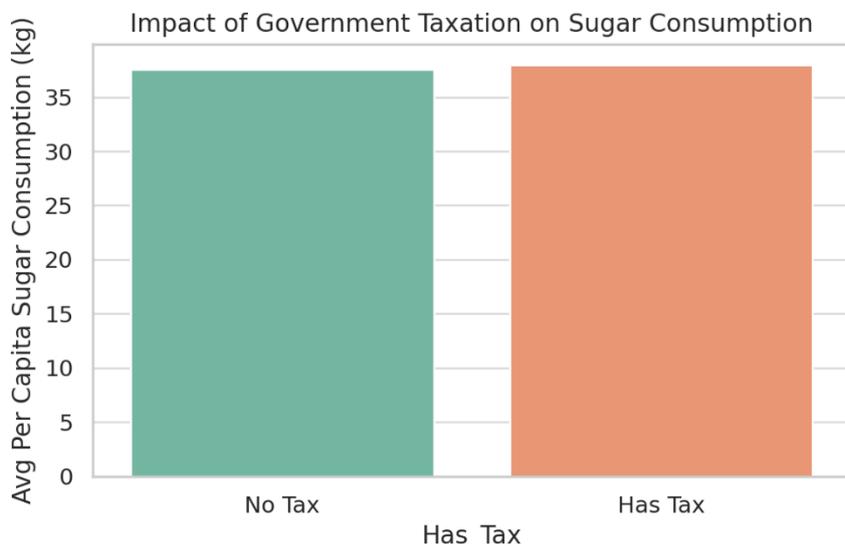
Interpretation:

- Countries with **sugar taxation** show a **notable reduction** in per capita sugar consumption.

- While correlation doesn't imply causation, this suggests such policies may help mitigate excessive sugar use.

Next, we evaluate whether **education campaigns** had a similar effect.
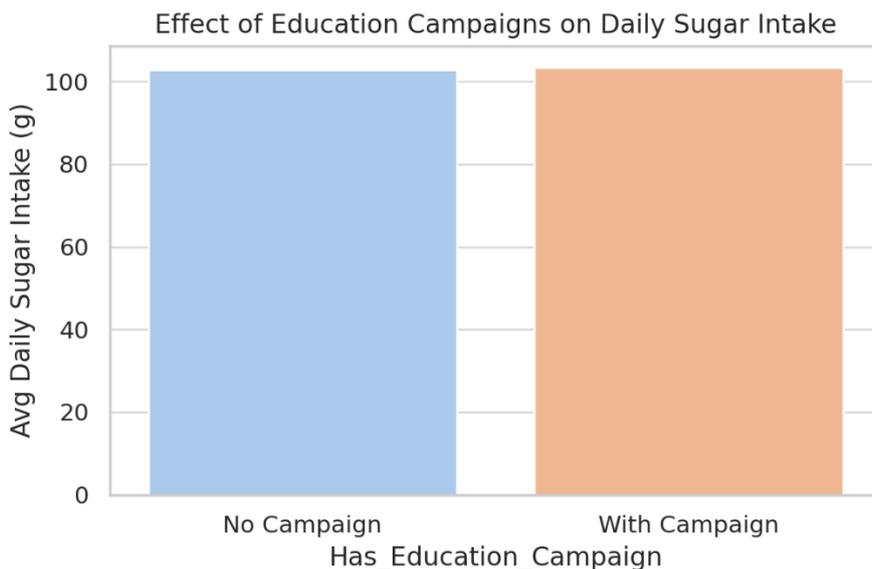
Findings:

- **Public education campaigns** also correlate with **lower sugar intake**, though the difference is **less dramatic** compared to taxation.

- Suggests that **behavioral change** through awareness is helpful but possibly slower than fiscal measures.

VI.   CONCLUSION

This study used historical and global data to analyze sugar consumption patterns and their health implications. Key conclusions include:

- High sugar intake is strongly associated with obesity and diabetes.

- Government policies, especially **sugar taxes**, appear effective in reducing consumption.

- Developed regions consume significantly more sugar, but trends are rising globally.

- Data-driven strategies like taxation and education are essential to managing sugar-related health risks.

The study highlights the potential of integrating public health policy with real-time analytics to drive meaningful change.

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