Australian Journal of Science and Technology

ISSN Number (2208-6404)
Volume 4; Issue 3; September 2020

Original Article

Consumers' preference index of some selected sweetmeat products available in Barisal City Corporation of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted through structured questionnaire at different locations of Barisal City Corporation regarding the consumers' preference to different sweetmeats products. A total of 70 respondents of different age categories were directly interviewed to serve the purpose of the study. Level of preferences for different sweetmeats was categorized as high, medium, low, and no preference. The respondents of all ages represented that Dhai is the top among the highly preferred sweetmeat products (41% of total response), more than 27% responses of medium preference were to Rasagolla, and approximately 16% of the no preference response were directed to Chhana and Khirsha, respectively. Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for all the respondents was calculated. The rank order on the basis of CPI for different sweetmeats was Dhai > Rasagolla > Rasamalai > Monda > Kalojam > Samdesh > Malaikari > Chamcham > Dry misty > Chhana > Khirsha. We have also analyzed and discussed the effect of age of the consumer on the preference toward different sweetmeat items. Dhai, Monda, Rasagolla, and Rasamalai were mostly preferred by the respondents aged <50 years. Dhai, Rasagolla, and Rasamalai are also preferred most by people above 50 year of age but they like Monda to the least level. Overall, preference toward different sweetmeat products by consumers of different age category varies widely. While Dhai, Rasagolla, Rasamalai, and Malaikari are preferred by most consumers irrespective of age, majority of the consumers showed no preference to products such as Khirsha and Chhana. Further study in a broader scale can help sweetmeat shops to figuring out the products most preferred by consumers of different age and categorization of product for different consumer groups.

Keywords: Sweetmeat, Preference index, age category, consumer survey

Submitted: 31-08-2020, **Accepted:** 16-09-2020, **Published:** 30-09-2020

INTRODUCTION

Sweetmeat means a food rich in sugar with milk. In this world, it is too difficult to find a man who does not like sweets. Almost same scenario found in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi people also like to eat milk made sweets. In Bengali's daily life without milk made sweets, no festivals can be celebrated. For that reason, sweetmeat shops are almost found everywhere in Bangladesh. A huge number of milk made sweetmeat industries established to fulfill the demand of mass people in Bangladesh. These sweetmeat industries produce hundreds of items across the urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, sweets are divided in four categories, such as dry sweet, wet sweet, yogurt, and others. Various types of sweetmeats such as Dhai, Rasagolla, Rasamalai, Malaikari, Chamcham, Kalojam, Samdesh, Rajvog, Kanchagolla, Rosokadam, and Khirsha are being produced from milk. However, most commonly named dairy sweet products in Barisal are Rosogolla, Blackjam/Blackjamun/Kalojam, Yogurt, Chamcham, Malaikari, Samdesh, Chhana, Dry misty, Khirsha, and Monda.

Similar to milk, sweetmeats are healthy and delicious food due to its high nutritive and therapeutic value. Indigenous sweetmeats are delicious, wholesome, pleasant, nutritious, charming, and very popular dairy products in Bangladesh. In this era of industrialization, food habit of common

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people is changing day by day and an increased demand and consumption pattern of milk products are seen due to rapid growth of population as well as income and their status. That's why a good number of entrepreneurs have already come forward to deal with sweetmeat business by involving in sweetmeat production and marketing.

Sweetmeats occupy an important place in the diet of Bengalis and at their social ceremonies. It is an ancient custom among Hindus to distribute sweets at pujas. Sweets are also distributed at the end of Muslim milad. Conventionally, Bengalis distribute sweets among neighbors and relatives on a variety of occasion such as birthday, engagements, wedding, and success in examinations. Because Bengali misty made from different curd, they form an important part of daily diet. The sweetmeat industry has flourished because of its close links with social and religious ceremonies. Competition and changing tastes have helped to create many new sweets, and today, this industry has grown not only within the country but has also been spread abroad.

Occasions and sweetmeats are the two inseparable part of Bengali tradition as Bangladeshi people are very much fond of sweetmeats. In this country, people could not think to celebrate any auspicious events without sweetmeats. Not only in the country, Bangladeshi sweetmeats also famous to all over the world. A huge variety of sweetmeats are produced in our country; they are mostly different from other according to their sizes, colors, and tastes. Akanda (2000)[1] and Roy *et al.* (2002)[2] carried out research works based on processing and marketing of sweetmeats in some selected areas of Bangladesh. However, there is no specific and systematic study in this regard based on uses, consumer preferences, and marketing of milk products. A good number of studies have been conducted on consumption pattern of sweetmeats in Bangladesh. However, to the best of our knowledge, some sporadic study on consumer preferences for sweetmeats are conducted in Bangladesh with non-conclusive findings that could suggest sweetmeat manufacturers regarding consumers' preference. This gap in knowledge has inspired us to conduct a study on consumer preference of sweetmeats on a pilot scale. The study, therefore, may serve as a basis for further extensive study covering the countrywide market of sweetmeat products. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the consumer preferences to different sweetmeat products available in Barisal City Corporation of Bangladesh and thereby helping the sweetmeat manufacturers to shape products range based on customer demand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area and Duration

The present study was conducted at different locations in Barisal City Corporation of Bangladesh and data were collected by direct interviewing of participants from April to September 2016.

Selection of Sweetmeats

Different types of sweetmeats were selected based on consumption patterns by the consumers of different areas. Dhai, Rasagolla, Malaikari, Rasamalai, Chamcham, Kalojam, Samdesh, Chhana, Dry misty, Khirsha, and Monda were selected for this study purpose.

Age

Age of a consumer was measured in terms of actual years from his/her birth to the time of interview on the basis of his/her statement. A score of 1 was assigned for each years of his/her age.

Selection of Consumers

In this study, 70 consumers were selected from different locations in Barisal City Corporation in Bangladesh. Consumers of different ages and representative of all places within the Barisal City Corporation jurisdiction were communicated beforehand for the consent to participate in this study, final study group was selected randomly from within the agreed participants.

Preparation of Survey Schedule

The survey schedule was designed in accordance with the objective of the research work. A preliminary schedule was developed for recording data to be obtained from consumer. The contents and appropriateness of the interview schedule were judged by the advisory committee. A draft interview schedule was prepared by keeping in mind the following things such as (i) to test suitability of the selected sweetmeat items, (ii) to test and verify coverage of all items of the questionnaire, (iii) to identify the questions which respondents found difficult to answer, and (iv) to assess the respondents willingness and cooperation. After necessary modification, the schedules were improved, modified, and rearranged in a simple manner to avoid misunderstanding and to get accurate answer. The schedule was then finalized and questions were listed in a logical sequence so that respondents could easily answer. A copy of the finalized interview schedule is attached in the Appendix.

Collection of Data

The whole survey was conducted by the first named author after the preparation of the final questionnaire. The study was based on sweetmeats and data were collected from the selected consumers by direct interview. Before making actual interview, the aims and objectives of the study were explained to the respondent so that they could be convinced as to the purpose of the study and talked freely. Then, the questions were asked in a very simple manner with explanation of questions whenever necessary. Reaching to every respondent,

several questions were asked in a logical sequence so that the respondents could recollect facts easily. To attain accuracy and reliability of data, care and caution were taken during data collection. Attention was paid to the mood of the respondents and a congenial relationship was maintained between the respondents and the researcher. After completion of each interview, the schedule was checked to be sure that all the answers of the questionnaire were collected. To minimize errors, data were collected in local language and units, and these were subsequently converted into appropriate standard text and units.

Measurement of Dependent Variable

Preferences of sweetmeats were dependent variable for this study. To measure the preference of sweetmeats, a consumer selected sweetmeats were identified during choice of the interview schedule. A 4-point numerical rating scale was developed to explore the extent of preference of sweetmeats. The weights were assigned to each of the responses as described in Table 1. Respondents' age category is given in Table 1a.

Table 1: Extent of preference and their measurements

Extent of preference	Weightss
No preference at all	0
Little preference	1
Moderate preference	2
High preference	3

Table 1a: Age category of the respondents interviewed

Age	Respondents	Total respondents
Up to 30 years	17	70
30–50 years	34	
Above 50 years	19	

Preference score of a respondent could range from 0 to 3, 0 indicating no preference, 3 indicating high preference, 2 indicating moderate preference, and 1 indicating little preference. For clear understanding and in-depth analysis of preference of a respondent to sweetmeats was computed using the following formulae[3]:

$$\text{Computed Preference Index (CPI)} = C_{hp} \times 3 + C_{mp} \times 2 + C_{lp} \times 1 + C_{np} \times 0$$

Where,

C_{hp} = Consumers with high preference
C_{mp} = Consumers with moderate preference
C_{lp} = Consumers with little preference
C_{np} = Consumers with no preference

The CPI value for a sweetmeat could range from 0 to 210 (since the total respondents were 70), 0 indicating no preference and 210 the very high preference.

Data Analysis

Collected data were checked and crosschecked before transferring to the computer. In analyzing the data, pivot tables and statistical methods in Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation, 2017) were used to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Table 2: Preference to different sweetmeats among all the respondents irrespective of age

Name of sweetmeat	Level of Preference								Total response for each sweetmeat category
	High		Medium		Low		No preference		
	Positive response	% of total*	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	
Dhai	32	41.0	28	17.0	3	1.8	7	2.0	70
Rasagolla	8	10.3	45	27.3	10	5.9	7	2.0	70
Rasamalai	14	17.9	28	17.0	20	11.8	8	2.2	70
Malaikari	-	0.0	14	8.5	9	5.3	47	13.1	70
Kalojam	-	0.0	19	11.5	20	11.8	31	8.7	70
Chamcham	-	0.0	7	4.2	22	13.0	41	11.5	70
Samdesh	1	1.3	2	1.2	31	18.3	36	10.1	70
Chhana	-	0.0	1	0.6	11	6.5	58	16.2	70
Dry misty	-	0.0	1	0.6	26	15.4	43	12.0	70
Khirsha	-	0.0	0	0.0	12	7.1	58	16.2	70
Monda	23	29.5	20	12.1	5	3.0	22	6.1	70
Total response for preference category	77	100	165	100	169	100	358	100	770

*Determined based on total response within specific preference category.

RESULTS

A survey was conducted through structured questionnaire at different locations in Barisal City Corporation of Bangladesh regarding the consumers' preference to different sweetmeats products. The age category of the respondents is given in Table 1a. It is evident that about 50% of the respondents were of the middle-aged (30–50 years) adult peoples, representing mostly the employed demographic group in the society.

Table 3: Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for all respondents

Name of Sweetmeat	Probable minimum CPI	Probable maximum CPI	Calculated CPI
Dhai	0	210	155
Rasagolla	0	210	124
Rasamalai	0	210	118
Malaikari	0	210	37
Kalojam	0	210	58
Chamcham	0	210	36
Samdesh	0	210	38
Chhana	0	210	13
Dry misty	0	210	28
Khirsha	0	210	12
Monda	0	210	114

Table 4: Classification of sweetmeats on the basis of CPI for all the respondents

Preference category	Ranges of CPI	Sweetmeats
Low	0–29	Khirsha, Dry misty, Chhana
Moderate	30–79	Chamcham, Kalojam, Malaikari, Samdesh
High	Above 80	Dhai, Rasagolla, Rasamalai, Monda

Level of preferences to different sweetmeats by respondents of all ages is given in Table 2. Table 2 represents that Dhai was the top among the highly preferred sweetmeat products (41% of responses), more than 27% of responses showed medium preference for Rasagolla and more than 16% of the respondents said that they had no preference for each of Chana or Khirsha.

Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for all the respondents is presented in Table 3. The rank order on the basis of CPI for different sweetmeats was Dhai > Rasagolla > Rasamalai > Monda >Kalojam > Samdesh > Malaikari >Chamcham > Dry misty > Chhana > Khirsha.

On the basis of consumer preference of sweetmeats from computed preference index (CPI), sweetmeats can be classified into three categories (Table 4). Low preference category was designated for Khirsha, Dry misty, and Chhana with a CPI less than 30, moderate preference was assigned for CPI range from 30 to 79 which represented by Chamcham, Kalojam, Malaikari, and Samdesh. Any product with CPI greater than 80 was considered as high preference category, that is, Dhai, Rasagolla, Rasamali, and Monda in our study based on consumers' age.

We have also analyzed and discussed the effect of age of the consumer on the preference toward different sweetmeat items.

Table 5: Preference to different sweetmeats for the respondents aged <30 years

Name of sweetmeat	Level of preference								Total response
	High		Medium		Low		No preference		
	Positive response	% of total*	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	
Dhai	8	44.4	7	15.2	-	-	2	2.5	17
Rasagolla	-	0.0	12	26.1	2	4.7	3	3.8	17
Rasamalai	1	5.6	7	15.2	6	14.0	3	3.8	17
Malaikari	-	0.0	2	4.3	2	4.7	13	16.3	17
Kalojam	-	0.0	8	17.4	4	9.3	5	6.3	17
Chamcham	-	0.0	2	4.3	5	11.6	10	12.5	17
Samdesh	1	5.6	1	2.2	7	16.3	8	10.0	17
Chhana	-	0.0	-	0.0	5	11.6	12	15.0	17
Dry misty	-	0.0	1	2.2	8	18.6	8	10.0	17
Khirsha	-	0.0	-	0.0	2	4.7	15	18.8	17
Monda	8	44.4	6	13.0	2	4.7	1	1.3	17
Total response for preference category	18	100	46	100	43	100	80	100	187

*Determined based on total response within specific preference category.

Table 5 represents the preference to different sweetmeats for the respondents aged less than 30 years. Dhai, Monda, and Rasagolla were mostly preferred by the respondents of this age category.

Computed preference index (Table 6) for this age category also suggests that Dhai, Monda, Rasagolla, and Rasamalai are preferred most by peoples under 30 years of age.

Table 7 shows that people of 30–50 years mostly prefers Dhai, Monda, Rasagola, and Rasamalai. This is also supported by CPI of different sweetmeats for respondents aged between 30 and 50 years (Table 8).

Table 6: Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for respondents aged <30 years

Name of sweetmeat	Probable minimum CPI	Probable maximum CPI	Calculated CPI
Dhai	0	51	38
Rasagolla	0	51	26
Rasamalai	0	51	23
Malaikari	0	51	6
Kalojam	0	51	20
Chamcham	0	51	9
Samdesh	0	51	12
Chhana	0	51	5
Dry misty	0	51	11
Khirsha	0	51	2
Monda	0	51	38

Tables 9 and 10 represent that Dhai, Rasagolla, and Rasamalai are preferred most by people above 50 years of age but they like Monda to the least level.

DISCUSSION

Overall preference toward different sweetmeat products by consumers of different age categories varies widely. However, Dhai, Rasagolla, Rasamalai, and Malaikari are preferred by most consumers irrespective of age, whereas majority of the consumers showed no preference to products such as Khirsha and Chhana. Monda was mostly preferred by consumers aged less than 50 years. The differences in the preference to different sweetmeat products by consumers of the different age groups can be attributed to individual differences in the choice of products based on taste, flavor, and price, however, are representative of the fact that preference of sweetmeat product changes across demographic groups may be due to physiological, mental, and health issues[4]. Our findings are consistent with Virdi *et al*.[5] who discussed that consumers while purchasing dairy products look for freshness, quality, taste and texture, variety, and convenience. The socioeconomic condition of consumers, namely, income status, occupational position, educational level, age, and region is the major determinants of the consumption patterns of milk and milk products. Since the consumers are not homogenous, the consumption pattern of milk such as quantum of purchase, source of purchase, and brand preference is continually varying.

Table 7: Preference to different sweetmeats among respondents aged between 30 and 50 years

Name of sweetmeat	Level of preference								Total response
	High		Medium		Low		No preference		
	Positive response	% of total*	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	
Dhai	15	34.9	14	15.7	2	2.6	3	1.8	34
Rasagolla	3	7.0	24	27.0	5	6.4	2	1.2	34
Rasamalai	10	23.3	16	18.0	6	7.7	2	1.2	34
Malaikari	-	0.0	12	13.5	4	5.1	18	11.0	34
Kalojam	-	0.0	5	5.6	13	16.7	16	9.8	34
Chamcham	-	0.0	4	4.5	13	16.7	17	10.4	34
Samdesh	-	0.0	-	0.0	15	19.2	19	11.6	34
Chhana	-	-	-	-	4	5.1	30	18.3	34
Dry misty	-	0.0	-	0.0	9	11.5	25	15.2	34
Khirsha	-	0.0	-	0.0	5	6.4	29	17.7	34
Monda	15	34.9	14	15.7	2	2.6	3	1.8	34
Total response for preference category	43	100	89	100	78	100	164	100	374

*Determined based on total response within specific preference category.

The preference of any food item and per capita consumption can also be influenced by sex as is indicated by Wang and Li[6] that average consumption of all dairy products by adult men in the United States was 276, 25, 256, and 290 g/capita/d and for women 203, 206, 202, and 240 g/capita/d in 1977–78, 1989–91, 1994–95, and 1999–2004, respectively. Although the participants of our study were within the same City Corporation area, there cultural background may be different and may have affected preference to sweetmeat products (Shepherd and Raats[7]; Hoogland *et al*.[8]).

Roy *et al*.[2] examined the consumption pattern of milk and milk products among different income groups in some selected area in Bangladesh. Family data were collected through household survey during September 2001–May 2002 for 179 selected household from three different areas of Bangladesh, comprising 40 from rural, 61 from municipality town, and 71 from metropolitan city households form the basis. The sample households were classified into five income groups on monthly income as follows: i) < Tk. 3000; ii) Tk. 3000–6000; iii) Tk. 6000–9000; iv) Tk. 9000–12,000; and v) >Tk.12,000. Among milk and milk products, the major allocation of expenditure was devoted to liquid milk followed by sweetmeats and powder milk and other milk products. The municipality town households consume more milk, sweetmeats, and Dhai than rural and metropolitan city. On the other hand, metropolitan households consume more powder milk, condensed milk, ghee, and ice cream. Income, mobility, media access (Tse *et al*.),[9] and availability of more options (Kim *et al*.)[10] to choose from a range of sweetmeat products may also have affected the preference indices of available sweetmeat products.

Table 8: Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for respondents aged between 30 and 50 years

Name of sweetmeat	Probable minimum CPI	Probable maximum CPI	Calculated CPI
Dhai	0	102	75
Rasagolla	0	102	62
Rasamalai	0	102	68
Malaikari	0	102	28
Kalojam	0	102	23
Chamcham	0	102	21
Samdesh	0	102	15
Chhana	0	102	4
Dry misty	0	102	9
Khirsha	0	102	5
Monda	0	102	75

The sample size and range of products included in this study are not large enough to utilize the findings of this study in a generalized form for sweetmeat shopkeepers of Bangladesh, however, this study forms the basis of further study and clearly shows that sweetmeat manufacturers should be aware of demographic groups of their market to meet their satisfaction and also to grab the opportunity of market share with novelty in products targeting different age groups of interest.

Table 9: Preference to different sweetmeats among respondents aged more than 50 years

Name of sweetmeat	Level of preference								Total response
	High		Medium		Low		No preference		
	Positive response	% of total*	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	Positive response	% of total	
Dhai	9	52.9	7	23.3	1	2.1	2	1.8	19
Rasagolla	5	29.4	9	30.0	3	6.3	2	1.8	19
Rasamalai	3	17.6	5	16.7	8	16.7	3	2.6	19
Malaikari	-	-	-	0.0	3	6.3	16	14.0	19
Kalojam	-	-	6	20.0	3	6.3	10	8.8	19
Chamcham	-	-	1	3.3	4	8.3	14	12.3	19
Samdesh	-	-	1	3.3	9	18.8	9	7.9	19
Chhana	-	-	1	3.3	2	4.2	16	14.0	19
Dry misty	-	-	-	0.0	9	18.8	10	8.8	19
Khirsha	-	-	-	0.0	5	10.4	14	12.3	19
Monda	-	-	-	0.0	1	2.1	18	15.8	19
Total response for preference category	17	100	30	100	48	100	114	100	209

*Determined based on total response within specific preference category.

Table 10: Computed preference index (CPI) of different sweetmeats for respondents aged more than 50 years

Name of sweetmeat	Probable minimum CPI	Probable maximum CPI	Calculated CPI
Dhai	0	57	42
Rasagolla	0	57	36
Rasamalai	0	57	27
Malaikari	0	57	3
Kalojam	0	57	15
Chamcham	0	57	6
Samdesh	0	57	11
Chhana	0	57	4
Dry misty	0	57	9
Khirsha	0	57	5
Monda	0	57	1

CONCLUSION

Preference to different sweetmeat products by consumers of different age category varies widely. However, Dhai, Rasagolla, and Rasamalai are preferred by most consumers irrespective of age. Consumers over 50 years of age showed less preference for Monda, whereas majority of the consumers showed no preference to products such as Khirsha and Chhana. All the consumers together constitute the consumer market. Consumers play the key role in guiding an economy to the production of goods and services that they demand. Consumer's research is extremely important to market strategy of sweetmeat products, because knowledge of the factors influencing consumers' buying behavior and consumer's preference toward a product can help increase market share.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

M. A. Islam conceptualized the design of the experiment and developed the structured interview schedule, and G. M. Munna collected data for this experiment. Data organization, analyses, and drafting of the original manuscript were conducted by M. A. Islam, M. I. Omar, and G. M. Munna. T. Chanda and M. A. Matin contributed to the writing: Critical discussion and editing and fitting the manuscript into present format.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The original draft of this manuscript was prepared and submitted to the Faculty of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine of Patuakhali Science and Technology University as a research report by G. M. Munna under the supervision of M. A. Islam for the partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of B. Sc. in Animal Husbandry (Hons).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the contribution of all participants in this survey-based research work.

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