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Strategic marketing and consumer perception of dried fruit brands: The role of entrepreneurs in promoting dried fruit consumption in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This research focuses on developing a comprehensive marketing strategy for a new dry fruit brand in Bangladesh. Dry fruits are gaining popularity globally due to their nutritional benefits and ease of storage, but the culture around their consumption remains limited in Bangladesh. This paper investigates consumer perceptions and preferences regarding dried fruits, identifying key market opportunities and challenges. Through a blend of primary data collected from consumers and secondary data from various publications, the research analyzes market trends and proposes strategic approaches to building brand awareness, fostering consumer loyalty, and increasing market share. The study also explores how new business can address consumer confusion related to sugar-infused dried fruits and position itself as a leader in the health-conscious snack segment.

Keywords: Dry fruit marketing strategy; Consumer preference; Sugar-infused dried fruits; Dry fruits for weight management; Consumption trends; Market analysis

1. Introduction

Dried fruits have become increasingly popular worldwide due to their long shelf life, nutritional value, and convenience as a snack option. They are rich in essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber, making them a healthy alternative to sugary snacks and confectionery. The global market for dried fruits has seen significant growth, driven by rising consumer awareness of healthy eating, increased demand for on-the-go snacks, and the expanding range of dried fruit products available in the market [1].

In Bangladesh, the market for dried fruits is still emerging, with considerable potential for growth due to the country's large agricultural base and increasing consumer interest in healthier food options. The primary objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for a dried fruit brand named "Smart Orchard" in Bangladesh. This strategy aims to enhance brand visibility, consumer engagement, and market penetration by leveraging insights into consumer preferences, market trends, and effective promotional tactics.

The marketing strategy focuses on several key aspects, including product positioning, brand differentiation, and targeted communication to reach specific consumer segments. The concept of dried fruits as a healthy and convenient snack aligns with global trends where consumers increasingly seek products that offer both health benefits and convenience [2]. By understanding the preferences of local consumers and aligning the product offerings to meet these needs, Smart Orchard can effectively capitalize on the growing market demand.

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Globally, dried fruits are considered a niche yet rapidly growing market within the broader snack industry. The market dynamics are shaped by factors such as evolving dietary habits, rising disposable incomes, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical production. For instance, research has shown that consumers are willing to pay a premium price for dried fruits that are organically produced or have fair trade certifications, reflecting a broader trend towards socially responsible consumption [3].

In the context of Bangladesh, the dried fruit market is characterized by several challenges, including limited consumer awareness, higher price sensitivity, and competition from imported brands. However, the local production of dried fruits offers opportunities for differentiation through fresh sourcing, quality assurance, and price competitiveness. New brand can position itself as a premium, locally-produced alternative that provides value to health-conscious consumers looking for nutritious snacks [4].

The primary objective of this research is to explore the variables necessary for creating an integrated marketing strategy for new brand, focusing on brand awareness, consumer engagement, and competitive positioning. By analyzing consumer behavior, market trends, and promotional strategies, the research seeks to identify the key drivers of brand success in the dried fruit market in Bangladesh.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on food marketing in developing countries, particularly in the context of value-added agricultural products. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for businesses looking to enter or expand within the dried fruit market, thereby supporting economic growth and enhancing consumer access to nutritious food options.

1.1. Research Approach

The study employs a mixed-method approach, utilizing both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data was gathered through surveys and structured questionnaires distributed among 280 respondents, capturing demographic information, purchasing preferences, and attitudes towards dried fruits. Secondary data was sourced from existing literature, market reports, and case studies on dried fruit marketing strategies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the market landscape and consumer dynamics.

By integrating these data sources, the research aims to formulate a robust marketing strategy that addresses the specific needs and preferences of Bangladeshi consumers. The outcomes of this study will not only guide new brand's marketing efforts but also serve as a reference for other existing brands seeking to innovate and thrive in the competitive dried fruit market.

2. Literature Review

Dried fruits have emerged as a popular snack choice due to their convenience, nutritional benefits, and long shelf life. The marketing of dried fruits involves understanding consumer segmentation, leveraging storytelling, and exploring value addition to enhance product appeal and market reach. This literature review explores these aspects by synthesizing findings from recent studies.

A study focusing on the dried mango market in Kenya and Germany highlighted the potential for dried fruits as a value-added product that can significantly improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. In Kenya, despite the challenges of high perishability and limited processing infrastructure, value addition through drying has been identified as a sustainable solution to extend shelf life and reduce post-harvest losses. The study also noted that solar drying is a cost-effective method widely used in tropical and subtropical regions, which helps maintain the nutritional quality of dried fruits while reducing transportation costs due to lower weight and volume [5].

The rise of e-commerce has created new opportunities for dried fruit marketing. Studies have shown that digital marketing strategies, including targeted social media advertising and influencer partnerships, can effectively reach diverse consumer segments. E-commerce platforms also provide a valuable channel for reaching younger consumers who prefer online shopping for convenience and product variety. Investing in digital marketing tools and optimizing online presence can significantly enhance market reach and sales for dried fruit brands [2].

The presentation of dried fruits, including packaging and branding, plays a crucial role in consumer perception and purchase decisions. According to Fleming, attractive packaging that clearly communicates the product's health benefits and origin can enhance consumer appeal. Moreover, sustainable packaging options are becoming increasingly

important, as consumers are not only looking for healthier food options but also environmentally friendly products. Thus, investment in eco-friendly packaging can provide a competitive advantage in the market [6].

Research by Sun and Liang (2021) investigated the factors influencing online purchase intentions of dried fruits in China. They identified three main consumer segments based on age: younger consumers (below 24 years) who value dried fruits as a trendy and healthy snack; middle-aged consumers (25-29 years) who integrate dried fruits into their healthy lifestyle; and older consumers (over 30 years) who prioritize convenience in their purchasing decisions. This study underscores the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to distinct consumer segments to boost engagement and sales. Additionally, it highlighted that the cost-effectiveness of marketing strategies significantly impacts consumer purchase intentions, suggesting that companies need to develop strategies that are both effective and economical [2].

The demand for dried fruits is significantly influenced by their health benefits and ethical production attributes. Rondoni et al. (2021) found that consumers are increasingly concerned about non-sensory attributes such as food safety, sustainability, and fair-trade certifications. These factors often drive higher willingness to pay among consumers, especially in developed markets like Europe. This trend suggests that marketing efforts highlighting these attributes can effectively attract health-conscious and ethically-minded consumers [3].

The European market, particularly Germany, presents significant opportunities for dried fruit exports from developing countries. The demand for fair trade and organic certified dried mangoes has grown, driven by consumer preferences for ethically produced and sustainable products. The study emphasized that enhancing the quality of dried fruits and addressing logistical challenges could help smallholder farmers better penetrate the European market, thereby increasing their income and contributing to local economic development (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries, 2021).

The success of dried fruit brands is often rooted in their ability to tell compelling stories that resonate with their target audience. According to Desygnier (2024), storytelling plays a crucial role in differentiating dried fruit products in a crowded market. Brands that effectively communicate their commitment to quality, sustainability, and health through engaging narratives are more likely to build a loyal customer base. Social media platforms serve as powerful tools for storytelling, allowing brands to connect with consumers on a personal level. This includes sharing behind-the-scenes content, collaborating with influencers, and using high-quality visuals that highlight the product's appeal. Consistency in messaging and authenticity in brand interactions are key drivers of consumer trust and loyalty [4].

The insights from these studies suggest that dried fruit brands need to adopt differentiated marketing strategies that align with consumer values and market trends. Emphasizing the health benefits, ethical production, and sustainability of dried fruits can help brands build strong consumer connections. Utilizing digital marketing platforms for storytelling, engaging directly with consumers, and exploring value addition are critical strategies for standing out in a competitive market.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Table 1 Insight idea of research design and criteria

Research Design	Both Qualitative and quantitative Research
Research Method	Survey Method
Research Instrument	Questionnaire
Sample size	280
Sample area	Dhaka
Sampling method	Convenience Sampling
Statistical package	SPSS
Analytical tool	Percentage analysis

The research employed a descriptive design, utilizing a structured questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. This approach was selected to systematically capture the preferences, perceptions, and behaviors of consumers regarding dried fruit products.

3.2. Participants

The study targeted a sample size of 280 respondents, who were selected using a convenience sampling method. Participants included consumers from Dhaka, with a demographic focus on individuals aged 30-60, primarily from upper and upper-middle social classes, with incomes of BDT 60,000 and above. The participants were segmented into primary and secondary age groups (30-45 and 45-60 years, respectively) and included both male and female respondents.

Table 2 Demographic Factors of Survey Participants

Demographic Factor	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	112	40%
	Female	168	60%
Age	18 – 24	56	20%
	25 – 35	98	35%
	36 – 55	84	30%
	Above 55	42	15%
Income	Below 20,000	42	15%
	20,000 – 40,000	84	30%
	40,000 – 60,000	98	35%
	Above 60,000	56	20%

The demographic data (Table 2) reflects a diverse range of participants, with a higher proportion of female respondents and a significant number of participants in the middle-income bracket, suggesting that new brand's target market may include middle-to-upper-income consumers who prioritize health and nutrition in their food choices [7].

3.3. Data Collection Methods

3.3.1. Primary Data Collection

Data was primarily gathered through surveys, utilizing both manual (face-to-face and telephone interviews) and electronic means (Google Forms and email).

The questionnaire, designed to capture variables influencing consumer behavior such as age, gender, income, and purchasing preferences, was tested in a pilot study with 30 participants. Based on this, the final survey was distributed to 280 respondents.

3.3.2. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was obtained from various sources, including academic journals, websites, prior research papers, and online articles relevant to the dried fruit market and consumer behavior trends [8].

3.4. Survey Instrument

The research employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The development process involved:

- Identifying necessary information and relevant variables.
- Crafting clear, concise questions tailored to the study's goals.

- Ensuring that the sequence and structure of the questions encouraged respondents to provide accurate answers.
- Testing and refining the survey through a pilot study to enhance its effectiveness.

3.5. Analytical Tools

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), focusing on percentage analysis to evaluate consumer preferences and behaviors regarding dried fruit products. This analysis helped shape marketing strategies for both emerging and established brands. [9,10].

4. Results and Discussion

The survey revealed key insights into consumer demographics and preferences regarding dried fruit products:

4.1. Demographic Insights

A large proportion of respondents (70%) were aged between 36-55 years, indicating significant interest in dried fruits among middle-aged consumers.

Women constituted 63.43% of the participants, suggesting that females, especially those making household food purchases, are a crucial market for dried fruit products.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.14%) earned over BDT 60,000 monthly, suggesting that higher-income consumers, who prioritize health and nutrition, are more likely to purchase dried fruits.

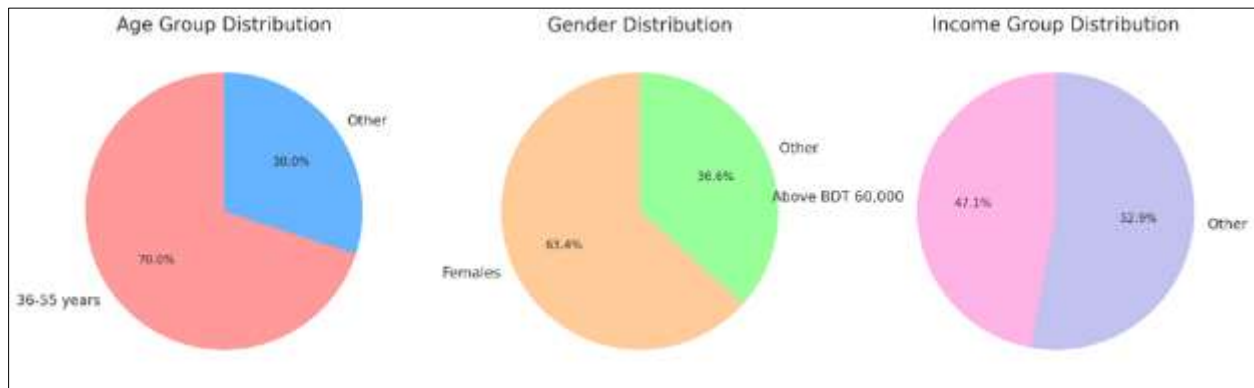


Figure 1 Demographic Insights

The pie charts in **Figure 1** present key demographic insights into dried fruit consumers. Notably, 70% of respondents are aged between 36 and 55, indicating strong interest in dried fruits among middle-aged individuals. Furthermore, women comprise 63.43% of the sample, underscoring their pivotal role in making household food purchasing decisions. Additionally, 47.14% of respondents fall into higher income brackets, earning over BDT 60,000 monthly, suggesting that dried fruits appeal more to wealthier consumers who prioritize health and nutrition over cost.

4.2. Consumer Attitudes and Preferences

- A considerable portion (61.79%) reported not consistently following a healthy or balanced diet, which presents an opportunity for new brands to promote dried fruits as a nutritious and convenient snack.
- Approximately 34.64% of respondents place significant importance on health factors when purchasing food, reinforcing the need to market dried fruits as a healthy alternative.
- Natural ingredients were the top priority for 47.9% of respondents, followed by products without additives (23.6%), aligning well with the perception of dried fruits as natural and minimally processed options [11].

4.3. Purchasing Behavior

A significant portion of respondents (33.57%) indicated a willingness to purchase locally produced dried fruits, highlighting a potential market opportunity for new brands if they can position their products as locally sourced and of premium quality. Table 3. Purchasing behavior of locally produced dried fruits

Table 3 Percentage on the basis of responses

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Agreed to buy	94	33.57%
Other responses	186	66.43%
Total	280	100%

This data suggests that about one-third of consumers are open to buying locally produced dried fruits, presenting a growth opportunity for new brands that effectively communicate the value of local sourcing and high-quality products.

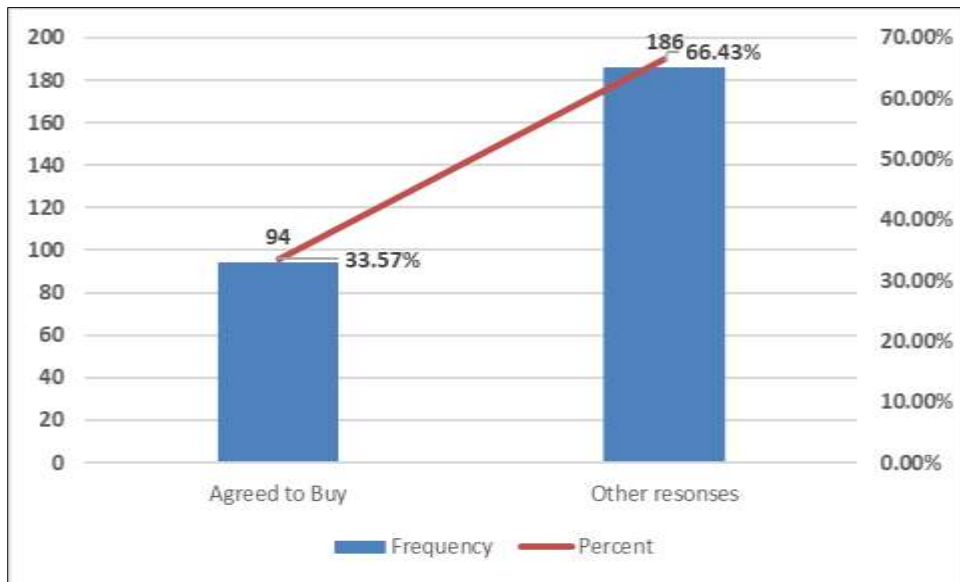


Figure 2 Purchasing behavior of locally produced dried fruits

The findings from this study offer key insights to inform effective marketing strategies. Firstly, the demographic data shows that middle-aged, higher-income consumers, particularly women, are the primary buyers of dried fruits. This suggests that marketing efforts should be strategically targeted at these groups to maximize impact [12].

4.4. Health and Convenience

The strong consumer preference for health-conscious and natural products highlights the importance of emphasizing the health benefits of dried fruits in branding and advertising. Positioning dried fruits as a convenient yet nutritious snack option will allow brands to tap into the growing trend of health-conscious eating, particularly among busy professionals and homemakers. [13,14].

Table 4 Preferences for Packed Food Attributes in terms of Health Benefits

Attributes	Frequency	Percent Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
The health aspect	14	4.8%	5%	5.0%
No additives	66	22.8%	23.6%	28.6%
Natural ingredients	134	46.2%	47.9%	76.4%
Flavors available	66	22.8%	23.6%	100%
Total	280	96.6%	100%	

This table 4 and figure 3, shows that natural ingredients are the most preferred attribute among the respondents, followed by the absence of additives, indicating a strong consumer preference for natural and less processed food products.

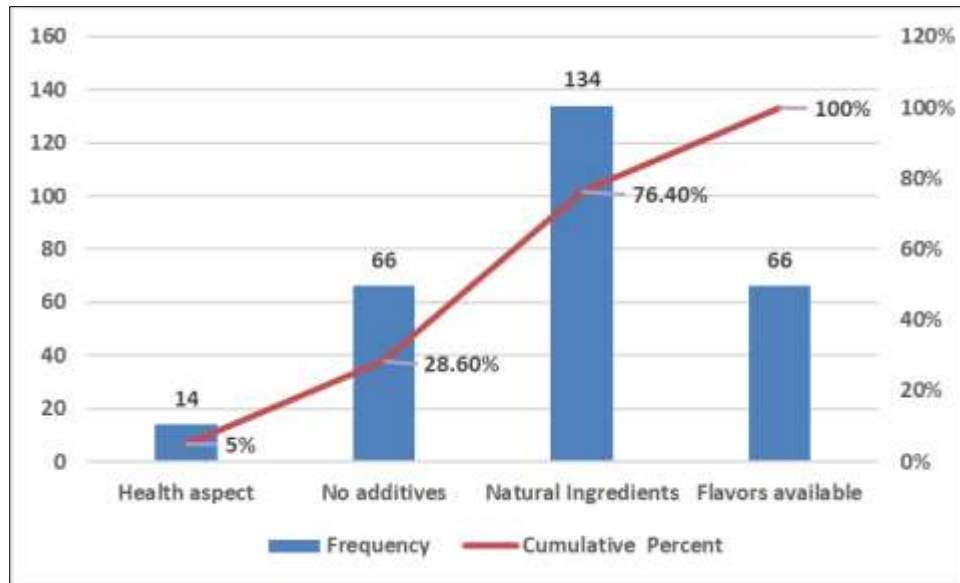


Figure 3 Preferences for packed food attributes in terms of health benefits

4.5. Product Positioning

Considering the strong consumer preference for natural, additive-free products, the new brand should prioritize clear packaging and labeling that emphasize the product's natural origins and health benefits. Highlighting dried fruits' nutrient density, low calorie content, and convenience as an on-the-go snack will further enhance their appeal to health-conscious consumers.

4.6. Marketing Strategy for New Brands

The marketing approach should focus on building brand awareness, promoting the health benefits of dried fruits, and offering high-quality products. The brand should emphasize its naturally sourced, nutritious offerings to cater to the rising demand for healthy snacks. Entrepreneurs should carefully select a brand name, color scheme, logo, and tagline that resonate with their target audience.

The four Ps of marketing—product, price, place, and promotion—are essential components of a successful marketing strategy. These elements are influenced by both internal and external factors and must be balanced to align with the business environment. Entrepreneurs need to understand the product lifecycle and adapt strategies accordingly. For dried fruits such as mango, papaya, pineapple, blueberries, and cherries, the benefits they offer can serve as a critical selling point, reinforcing their position as a smart, health-conscious choice.

By cultivating a brand personality that associates dried fruits with intelligence and health, new brands can appeal to consumers who value both. Given the high costs of processing dried fruits, the target market will likely be upper and upper-middle-class consumers. The premium pricing strategy should align with consumers' perception that dried fruits are a high-value product.

Place decisions are equally important. Dried fruits, as a premium product, should be readily available in urban markets where the target consumers reside. By ensuring product availability through a well-planned distribution strategy or even through their own stores, businesses can maintain product quality and offer fair pricing. Here are some other key elements of the marketing strategy new prospective brand:

- **Target Audience:** The brand primarily targets health-conscious individuals, including working professionals, mothers, athletes, and those managing health conditions like diabetes. Marketing strategies focus on these demographics by highlighting the convenience and health benefits of dried fruits as a nutritious alternative to unhealthy snacks [15].

- **Brand Positioning:** The brand positions itself as the smart choice for individuals seeking nutritious and convenient snacks. It emphasizes that consuming dried fruits is a thoughtful, health-conscious decision, with the tagline reinforcing this connection between smart consumption and smart living.
- **Brand Awareness and Advertising:** Consumer sales promotions play a key role in enticing customers to try the product. A combination of traditional and digital media, including television commercials, print ads, and social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube, can be used to build brand awareness. Consistent exposure through these channels ensures the brand becomes familiar to health-conscious consumers.
- **Public Relations (PR) Activities:** An effective PR strategy can build brand visibility and foster consumer trust. Activities like product launches, health campaigns on World Health Day or World Diabetes Day, and partnerships with fitness centers and yoga studios can position dried fruits as integral to a healthy lifestyle. Celebrity endorsements that align with the brand's personality can further strengthen its market presence [16].

4.7. Market Analysis for New Brand

- **Target Market Analysis:** The brand targets busy professionals, health-conscious individuals, and those seeking fiber-rich snacks. There is limited direct competition in the Bangladesh market for dried fruit products, but indirect competition exists with snacks like nuts and granola bars. Offering premium, locally produced dried fruits with strong quality assurance will help differentiate the brand.
- **Competitor Analysis:** Competitors, such as Sakura Plum and Sun Grown, offer nut products but lack comprehensive marketing strategies. These brands do not use broadcast media or advertising agencies, creating an opportunity for a new brand to capture market share with a stronger marketing presence. Furthermore, the brand's wide availability in all areas can be a key differentiator [17].
- **Consumer Preferences:** Survey data reveals that 47.9% of consumers value natural ingredients, while 23.6% prefer products without additives. These preferences align with the brand's focus on naturally sourced, additive-free dried fruits, positioning the brand as a healthier alternative to processed snacks.
- **E-commerce and Distribution:** The brand can capitalize on the growing e-commerce trend by expanding online sales. Coupled with availability in local retail outlets and branded stores in strategic locations, the brand can improve its accessibility and cater to the increasing preference for online grocery shopping.

The dried fruit brand's marketing strategy centers on building a health-conscious image appealing to busy consumers seeking nutritious snacks. By focusing on natural ingredients, convenience, and leveraging traditional and digital marketing, the brand aims to establish itself as a leader in the dried fruit market [18].

4.8. Market Potential

The strong consumer preference for locally produced dried fruits highlights significant market potential for new brands. To capitalize on this, brands can emphasize local sourcing, sustainability, and support for the local community, which resonates with the growing demand for *Deshi ponno* (local products). By focusing on these aspects, brands can differentiate themselves from imported competitors and create a deeper emotional connection with consumers who value local business support.

4.9. Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the positive outlook, there are challenges to address, including the higher price point of dried fruits, which may limit their appeal to lower-income consumers. However, the willingness of higher-income consumers to pay for premium, health-focused products presents a valuable opportunity. By positioning the brand as a premium product, they can target this segment effectively. Furthermore, educational campaigns highlighting the long-term health benefits of dried fruits can help justify the cost and broaden the product's appeal across different income groups.

5. Conclusion

This research explored the marketing strategy for the new and existing dried fruit brand in Bangladesh, focusing on consumer segmentation, brand differentiation, and targeted communication strategies. The study highlighted the growing potential of the dried fruit market, driven by increasing consumer awareness of health benefits, convenience, and the trend towards natural, minimally processed foods. By leveraging these insights, new and existing entrepreneurs can position itself as a premium, locally-sourced alternative that caters to the needs of health-conscious consumers. Key findings from the research indicate that consumer segments, particularly middle-aged and higher-income individuals, are highly receptive to dried fruit products that emphasize health, quality, and ethical production. This aligns with global trends where consumers are willing to pay a premium price for products that offer both nutritional benefits and align with their values, such as sustainability and fair trade. Effective use of storytelling and digital engagement, particularly

through social media and influencer collaborations, was identified as a crucial strategy for building brand loyalty and enhancing consumer connection.

The study also underscored the importance of value addition, such as solar drying, which not only extends the shelf life of fresh fruits but also provides a higher-value product that can compete in both local and international markets. This approach can help address challenges related to perishability and market accessibility, thereby supporting the economic sustainability of local producers.

This research recommends a multifaceted marketing approach that integrates traditional and digital channels, highlights the brand's unique selling points, and targets specific consumer segments with tailored messages. By emphasizing the brand's commitment to quality, sustainability, and local sourcing, entrepreneurs can differentiate their brand in a competitive market and build a strong, loyal customer base. Ultimately, the successful implementation of these strategies will not only enhance their market presence but also contribute to the broader goals of promoting healthier eating habits and supporting local agriculture in Bangladesh. Future research could further explore the impact of specific promotional tactics and the potential expansion into new markets, providing deeper insights into the long-term scalability and impact of the brand's marketing strategies.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

The present research work does not contain any studies performed on animals/humans' subjects by any of the authors.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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