

ISSN Print: 2617-4693 ISSN Online: 2617-4707 NAAS Rating (2025): 5.29 IJABR 2025; SP-9(9): 1497-1503 www.biochemjournal.com

Received: 15-06-2025 Accepted: 18-07-2025

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Sensory quality evaluation of beetroot (*Beeta vulgaris* L.) and pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) blended ready-to-serve (RTS) beverage

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DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26174693.2025.v9.i9Ss.5712

Abstract

The present investigation titled "Sensory Quality Evaluation of Beetroot (Beeta vulgaris L.) and Pineapple (Ananas comosus) Blended Ready-to-Serve (RTS) Beverage" was carried out in the Department of Post-Harvest Management, College of Horticulture and Research Station, Sankara-Patan, Durg (C.G.) during the academic year 2024-25. The experiment was conducted under Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with three replications, comprising seven treatments formulated with varying proportions of beetroot and pineapple juices. The treatment combinations included T₀ (100% beetroot juice), T₁ (95% beetroot + 5% pineapple juice), T₂ (90% beetroot + 10% pineapple juice), T₃ (85% beetroot + 15% pineapple juice), T₄ (80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice), T₅ (75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice), and T₆ (70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice). This study aimed to develop beetroot-pineapple RTS beverages, evaluate their sensory attributes, and assess consumer acceptability during storage. Sensory evaluation was conducted by a semi-trained panel using a 9-point hedonic scale over 45 days of storage. Results indicated that T₆ (70% beetroot + 30% pineapple) consistently received the highest scores for colour, appearance, flavour, taste, and overall acceptability, while pure beetroot juice (T₀) was least preferred. Although sensory scores declined gradually during storage, pineapple-rich blends maintained superior acceptability. These findings indicate that incorporating pineapple juice (20-30%) into beetroot RTS enhances sensory quality and storage stability of beetroot-based RTS beverages, making them more appealing to consumers and confirm the potential of beetroot-pineapple blends as a nutrient-enriched RTS beverage.

Keywords: Beetroot, beverage, organoleptic evaluation, overall acceptability, pineapple, RTS, taste

Introduction

The increasing demand for functional beverages has drawn considerable attention toward the utilization of fruits and vegetables in blended ready-to-serve (RTS) formulations. Consumers today not only expect refreshing taste but also seek drinks that offer additional health-promoting benefits. Beetroot (*Beeta vulgaris* L.) is widely recognized as a rich source of betalain pigments, phenolics, dietary nitrates, and minerals, all of which contribute to its antioxidant, antihypertensive, and hepatoprotective properties (Clifford *et al.*, 2015) ^[4]. Despite its nutritional superiority, the earthy flavour and intense colour of beetroot often restrict its direct consumer acceptance (Georgiev *et al.*, 2010) ^[6]. On the other hand, pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is one of the most popular tropical fruits, appreciated for its refreshing flavour, sweetness, and high vitamin C content (Basu and De, 2014) ^[2]. The blending of beetroot with pineapple offers a promising strategy to mask the undesirable earthy notes of beetroot while simultaneously enriching the nutritional profile and improving palatability (Singh *et al.*, 2019) ^[15]. Such combinations not only enhance taste and flavour balance but also provide an attractive colour and better consumer acceptance.

Sensory evaluation is a critical component in the development of any new beverage, as consumer preference is shaped by parameters such as appearance, aroma, flavour, mouthfeel, and overall acceptability (Amerine *et al.*, 1965) ^[1]. Previous studies on fruit-vegetable blends, such as carrot-mango and carrot-pineapple, have demonstrated improvements in both sensory and nutritional attributes (Lakshmi *et al.*, 2015) ^[9]. However, limited scientific

evidence is available on the sensory acceptance of beetrootpineapple blends, which presents a significant research gap. Therefore, the present investigation was undertaken to characterize the sensory attributes and assess consumer acceptability of a nutrient-enriched beetroot-pineapple blended RTS beverage.

Materials and method

The specific treatments included in the present study are T0 (100% beetroot juice), T_1 (95% beetroot + 5% pineapple juice), T_2 (90% beetroot + 10% pineapple juice), T_3 (85% beetroot + 15% pineapple juice), T_4 (80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice), T_5 (75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice), and T_6 (70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice) and was conducted in the 2024-25 academic year in the Processing Laboratory of the Department of Post-Harvest Management, College of Horticulture and Research Station, Mahatma Gandhi Udyanikee Evam Vanikee Vishwavidyalaya, Durg, Chhattisgarh. The experiment was carried out using a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with three replications.

Preparation of Beetroot-Pineapple RTS beverage

Fresh, healthy, and uniformly matured beetroot (Beta vulgaris L.) and pineapple (Ananas comosus) fruits were procured from the local market, while damaged, diseased, or immature fruits were discarded. The selected fruits were thoroughly washed under running tap water to remove adhering dirt and surface contaminants, followed by air drying to minimize surface moisture. Beetroots were peeled, cut into small pieces, and their juice extracted using a mixer-grinder and filtered through a double-layered muslin cloth; a similar procedure was followed for pineapple after peeling and coring. The clarified juices were blended in different proportions according to treatment formulations and thoroughly homogenized. The blends were standardized to 10° Brix total soluble solids (TSS) using cane sugar, acidified with 0.3% citric acid, and preserved with sodium benzoate at 600 ppm. The prepared beverages were hotfilled into pre-sterilized glass bottles (200-250 mL capacity), sealed immediately with airtight closures, and pasteurized in boiling water at 100 °C for 15 minutes. After cooling to room temperature, the bottles were stored under ambient laboratory conditions for 45 days, during which samples were periodically analyzed for sensory parameters (Fig.1).

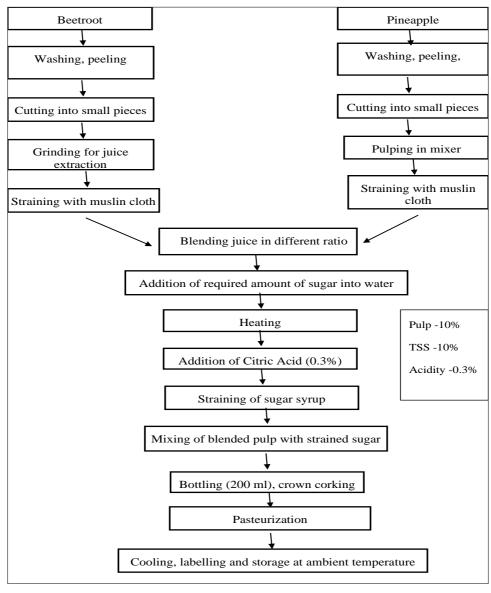


Fig 1: Flow chart for preparing beetroot and pineapple blended RTS beverage.

Sensory evaluation: The sensory acceptability of the beetroot-pineapple RTS beverage was evaluated by a semitrained panel of five judges drawn from different age groups and dietary habits, comprising assistant professors from various departments of the College of Horticulture and Research Station, Sankara-Patan, Durg (C.G.). The evaluation was carried out using the 9-point hedonic scale described by Amerine et al. (1965) [1], in which panelists rated each attribute on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 = dislike extremely, 2 = dislike very much, 3 = dislike moderately, 4 = dislike slightly, 5 = neither liked nor disliked, 6 = like slightly, 7 = like moderately, 8 = like very much, and 9 = like extremely. Each panelist received coded samples of the different treatments along with a score sheet to record their observations. The sensory parameters assessed included taste, colour, appearance, flavour, and overall acceptability. To maintain uniformity, the samples were presented under identical conditions, and drinking water was provided to the panelists between evaluations to cleanse the palate. The recorded scores were statistically analyzed to identify significant differences among treatments and to determine the relative contribution of each sensory attribute to overall product quality.

Result and discussion

Colour: The sensory evaluation of the beetroot-pineapple RTS beverages revealed significant differences in colour scores across treatments and during storage (Table 1; Fig.2). At the initial stage (0 day), the highest colour score (7.9) was recorded in Treatment T6 (70% beetroot + 30% pineapple), followed by T₅ -75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.7) and T₄- 80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice (7.4), which correspond to "like very much" on the 9-point hedonic scale. The intermediate treatments (T_2 and T_3) recorded moderate scores, while the lowest acceptability was observed in T0 (100% beetroot juice, 6.3). The incorporation of pineapple juice enhanced colour acceptability, most likely due to the blending of bright yellow carotenoids from pineapple with the deep red betalains of beetroot, producing a more visually appealing hue. At 15 days, the highest scores were again in T6-70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.8) and T₅ (7.6), whereas T0 reduced to 6.1, indicating lesser preference. By 30 days, the trend continued with T₆ and T₅ (7.3 each) maintaining superior scores, while T_0 dropped to 5.7, shifting towards "neither like nor dislike." A gradual decline in colour scores was observed during storage in all treatments. By 45 days, T_{6} - 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (6.8) and T_{5} - 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.0) still retained relatively higher scores, while T₀ decreased to 5.5, indicating lower preference. The decreasing trend can be attributed to the degradation of natural pigments such as betalains and carotenoids, which are highly sensitive to oxygen, light, and temperature (Herbach et al., 2006 [7]; Delgado-Vargas and Paredes-López, 2020) [5]. Similar findings have been reported in beetroot-pineapple beverages by Singh et al. (2019) [15] and in mixed fruit RTS beverages by Shukla and Khandelwal (2021) [14]. Recent studies also confirm that pigment breakdown is a common cause of declining visual quality during storage (Chauhan et al., 2022; Patel et al., 2023) [3, 11].

Appearance: Significant differences in appearance scores were observed among treatments, with scores declining

gradually during storage (Table 2; Fig. 3). At 0 day, the maximum score (7.8) was recorded in T6- 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice, followed by T_5 - 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.5) and T_4 -80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice (7.4), whereas T0 (6.2) scored the lowest, indicating "like slightly." The higher scores in pineapple-incorporated treatments suggest that blending improved brightness, translucency, and clarity, resulting in better overall appearance. By 15 days, T6- 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.5) and T₅ (7.3) still retained higher acceptability, while T0 reduced to 6.0. After 30 days, T₆ (7.2) remained the most acceptable, followed by T_5 (7.0), whereas T_0 (5.8) scored the lowest. During storage, appearance scores declined progressively, with T_6 - 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice and T₅ maintaining higher acceptability while T0 reduced to 5.5 by 45 days. The decrease was mainly due to pigment degradation, enzymatic and nonenzymatic browning, turbidity, and precipitation of suspended solids. Betalains in beetroot are particularly unstable under varying storage conditions, while carotenoids in pineapple also undergo oxidative degradation (Stintzing and Carle, 2007 [16]; Delgado-Vargas and Paredes-López, 2020) ^[5]. Similar results were reported by Singh *et al.* (2019) [15] and Shukla and Khandelwal (2021) [14], who observed that blending fruit juices improved initial appearance but storage invariably reduced clarity.

Flavour

The flavour of RTS beverages varied significantly among treatments and showed a declining trend over storage (Table 3; Fig. 4). At 0 day, T₆ (7.7) recorded the highest score, followed by T_5 -75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.3) and T4- 80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice (7.1), all within the "like very much" range. In contrast, T_0 (6.0) received the lowest score, reflecting the earthy aftertaste of pure beetroot juice. Incorporation of pineapple significantly improved flavour by balancing acidity, sweetness, and aroma, thereby masking the earthy geosmin notes of beetroot. After 15 days of storage, flavour scores reduced slightly across treatments. T_6 -70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.4) remained the most acceptable, while T_0 dropped to 5.8, showing only "like slightly" acceptability. At 30 days, the trend continued with T_{6} - 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.3) and T_5 - 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (6.9) maintaining higher scores, whereas T0 declined further to 5.6. During storage, flavour acceptability declined gradually in all treatments, with T₆ maintaining the highest scores (6.8 at 45 days), while T0 decreased to 5.2, nearing "neither like nor dislike". Loss of volatile compounds, oxidation of phenolics, and the development of off-flavours were the main reasons for the decline (Sharma et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2022) [8, 13]. Similar improvements in flavour stability due to blending were also observed in fruit-vegetable beverages by Singh et al. (2019), Shagiwal and Deen (2022), and Patel et al. (2023) [11, 12, 15].

Taste

Taste scores followed a pattern similar to flavour (Table 4; Fig. 5). At the initial stage, T_{6} - 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.7) achieved the highest acceptability, followed by T_{5} - 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.5) and T4-80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice (7.3), all under the "like very much" category. Pure beetroot juice (T_{0}) scored the lowest (6.3) due to its earthy and slightly bitter

Incorporation of pineapple improved acceptability through its sugar-acid balance and fruity volatiles. With storage, a progressive decline was noted. At 15 days of storage, the overall scores declined slightly; T₆ maintained the highest (7.5) acceptability, while T0 dropped to 5.9. At 30 days, the same trend was evident, with T6 -70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (7.2) and T_5 (7.0) showing higher scores, whereas T₀ (5.7) recorded the least preference and by 45 days, T₆ maintained a score of 7.2, whereas T0 dropped to 5.3, approaching "neither like nor dislike." Declines in taste were attributed to oxidation of ascorbic acid, sugar degradation, and off-flavour development (Sharma et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2022) [8, 13]. Similar findings were reported by Singh et al. (2019) [15] and Mehta and Bhat (2021) [10], confirming that blending enhances palatability and delays deterioration compared to single-fruit juices. Pineapple's high sugar content and balanced acidity contributed to improved taste stability compared to beetroot alone. Similar findings were reported by Singh et al. (2019) [15] in beetroot-pineapple blends, where higher pineapple ratios enhanced taste and overall acceptability. Overall, it was evident that pineapple incorporation (20-30%) significantly improved the taste of beetroot RTS beverages, with T6 -70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice blend consistently receiving the highest scores throughout storage, while T0 (100% beetroot juice) recorded the lowest acceptability.

Overall Acceptability: Overall acceptability scores also showed significant variation across treatments and declined with storage (Table 5; Fig. 6). At 0 day, T₆ (70% beetroot + 30% pineapple), followed by T₅- 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (7.7) and T₄ 80% beetroot + 20% pineapple juice recorded the highest scores, while T₀ (6.0) was least acceptable. After 15 days, overall acceptability slightly decreased across all treatments. T₆ -70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice, retained the highest score (7.5) followed by T_5 (7.3), while T0 dropped to 5.8, entering the "like slightly" category. At 30 days, the decreasing trend continued; T6 remained superior (7.0) while T₅ scored (7.1) and T0 reduced further to 5.3. By 45 days, the overall acceptability of T₆- 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple juice (6.8) and T_{5} - 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice (6.7) remained relatively higher, while T0 declined to 5.2, entering the "neither like nor dislike" category, suggesting minimal consumer preference. The decline in acceptability is likely due to combined effects of colour fading, flavour loss, off-taste development, and ascorbic acid degradation (Sharma et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2022) [8, 13]. Pineapplerich blends (T₄-T₆) consistently out-performed beetroot-only beverages, supporting the role of blending in improving consumer preference. Similar outcomes were reported by Singh et al. (2019) and Patel et al. (2023) [11, 15], who emphasized that fruit blending improves flavour balance and overall quality in RTS beverages.

Table 1: Organoleptic evaluation (colour) of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

| Treatments | Colour Storage Period (in days) | | | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | |
| | T ₀ (Beetroot Juice (100%)) | 6.3 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 5.5 | 5.9 |
| T ₁ (Beetroot Juice (95%) and Pineapple Juice (5%)) | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 5.9 | 6.2 | |
| T ₂ (Beetroot Juice (90%) and Pineapple Juice (10%)) | 7.0 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 6.7 | |
| T ₃ (Beetroot Juice (85%) and Pineapple Juice (15%)) | 7.1 | 7.0 | 6.9 | 6.5 | 6.9 | |
| T ₄ (Beetroot Juice (80%) and Pineapple Juice (20%)) | 7.4 | 7.1 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.1 | |
| T ₅ (Beetroot Juice (75%) and Pineapple Juice (25%)) | 7.7 | 7.6 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 7.4 | |
| T ₆ (Beetroot Juice (70%) and Pineapple Juice (30%)) | 7.9 | 7.8 | 7.3 | 6.8 | 7.4 | |
| CD at 5% | 0.273 | 0.228 | 0.267 | 0.177 | - | |
| SE(m)± | 0.089 | 0.075 | 0.087 | 0.058 | - | |
| SE(d) | 0.126 | 0.105 | 0.123 | 0.082 | - | |

Table 2: Organoleptic evaluation (appearance) of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

| Treatments | Appearance Storage Period (in days) | | | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|-----|--|
| | | | | | | |
| T ₀ (Beetroot Juice (100%)) | 6.2 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 5.9 | |
| T ₁ (Beetroot Juice (95%) and Pineapple Juice (5%)) | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 6.1 | |
| T ₂ (Beetroot Juice (90%) and Pineapple Juice (10%)) | 6.9 | 6.7 | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.6 | |
| T ₃ (Beetroot Juice (85%) and Pineapple Juice (15%)) | 7.0 | 6.7 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 6.7 | |
| T ₄ (Beetroot Juice (80%) and Pineapple Juice (20%)) | 7.4 | 7.0 | 6.9 | 6.7 | 7.0 | |
| T ₅ (Beetroot Juice (75%) and Pineapple Juice (25%)) | 7.5 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.2 | |
| T ₆ (Beetroot Juice (70%) and Pineapple Juice (30%)) | 7.8 | 7.5 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 7.4 | |
| CD at 5% | 0.177 | 0.228 | 0.154 | 0.222 | - | |
| SE(m)± | 0.058 | 0.075 | 0.05 | 0.072 | - | |
| SE(d) | 0.082 | 0.105 | 0.071 | 0.102 | - | |

Table 3: Organoleptic evaluation (flavour) of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

| Treatments | Flavour Storage Period (in days) | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| | | | | | |
| T ₀ (Beetroot Juice (100%)) | 6.0 | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.2 | 5.7 |
| T ₁ (Beetroot Juice (95%) and Pineapple Juice (5%)) | 6.2 | 6.1 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 6.0 |
| T ₂ (Beetroot Juice (90%) and Pineapple Juice (10%)) | 6.7 | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 6.4 |
| T ₃ (Beetroot Juice (85%) and Pineapple Juice (15%)) | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.5 |
| T ₄ (Beetroot Juice (80%) and Pineapple Juice (20%)) | 7.1 | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.6 | 6.8 |
| T ₅ (Beetroot Juice (75%) and Pineapple Juice (25%)) | 7.3 | 7.1 | 6.9 | 6.7 | 7.0 |
| T ₆ (Beetroot Juice (70%) and Pineapple Juice (30%)) | 7.7 | 7.4 | 7.3 | 6.8 | 7.3 |
| CD at 5% | 0.358 | 0.27 | 0.232 | 0.168 | - |
| SE(m)± | 0.117 | 0.088 | 0.076 | 0.055 | - |
| SE(d) | 0.165 | 0.125 | 0.107 | 0.078 | - |

Table 4: Organoleptic evaluation (taste) of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

| | Taste | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|--|
| Treatments | Storage Period (in days) | | | | | |
| | 0 | 15 | 30 | 45 | Mean | |
| T ₀ (Beetroot Juice (100%)) | 6.3 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 5.8 | |
| T ₁ (Beetroot Juice (95%) and Pineapple Juice (5%)) | 6.4 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 6.2 | |
| T ₂ (Beetroot Juice (90%) and Pineapple Juice (10%)) | 6.7 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.5 | |
| T ₃ (Beetroot Juice (85%) and Pineapple Juice (15%)) | 7.0 | 6.8 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.7 | |
| T ₄ (Beetroot Juice (80%) and Pineapple Juice (20%)) | 7.3 | 7.1 | 7.0 | 6.6 | 7.0 | |
| T ₅ (Beetroot Juice (75%) and Pineapple Juice (25%)) | 7.5 | 7.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.2 | |
| T ₆ (Beetroot Juice (70%) and Pineapple Juice (30%)) | 7.7 | 7.5 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.4 | |
| CD at 5% | 0.291 | 0.211 | 0.154 | 0.345 | - | |
| SE(m)± | 0.095 | 0.069 | 0.05 | 0.113 | - | |
| SE(d) | 0.135 | 0.098 | 0.071 | 0.159 | - | |

Table 5: Organoleptic evaluation (overall acceptability) of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period

| | Overall Acceptability | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|--|
| Treatments | Storage Period (in days) | | | | | |
| | 0 | 15 | 30 | 45 | Mean | |
| T ₀ (Beetroot Juice (100%)) | 6.0 | 5.8 | 5.3 | 5.2 | 5.6 | |
| T ₁ (Beetroot Juice (95%) and Pineapple Juice (5%)) | 6.3 | 6.2 | 6.0 | 5.7 | 6.1 | |
| T ₂ (Beetroot Juice (90%) and Pineapple Juice (10%)) | 6.7 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 6.4 | |
| T ₃ (Beetroot Juice (85%) and Pineapple Juice (15%)) | 6.8 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 6.7 | |
| T ₄ (Beetroot Juice (80%) and Pineapple Juice (20%)) | 7.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.9 | |
| T ₅ (Beetroot Juice (75%) and Pineapple Juice (25%)) | 7.7 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 7.2 | |
| T ₆ (Beetroot Juice (70%) and Pineapple Juice (30%)) | 7.8 | 7.5 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 7.3 | |
| CD at 5% | 0.463 | 0.636 | 0.522 | 0.416 | - | |
| SE(m)± | 0.151 | 0.208 | 0.17 | 0.136 | - | |
| SE(d) | 0.214 | 0.294 | 0.241 | 0.192 | - | |

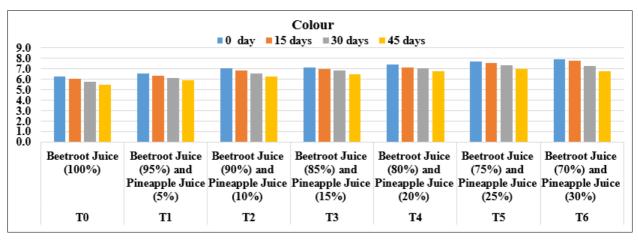


Fig 2: Organoleptic evaluation - colour of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

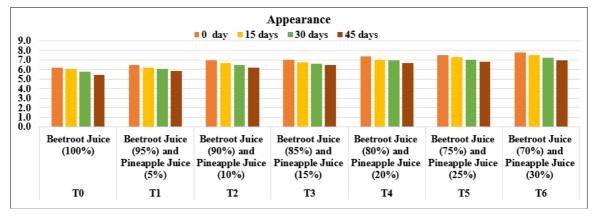


Fig 3: Organoleptic evaluation -appearance of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

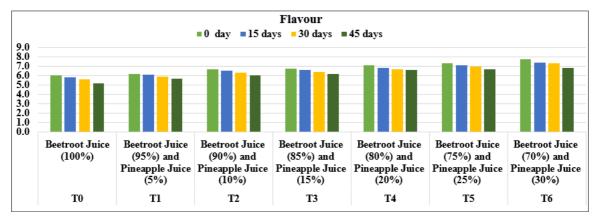


Fig 4: Organoleptic evaluation -flavour of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

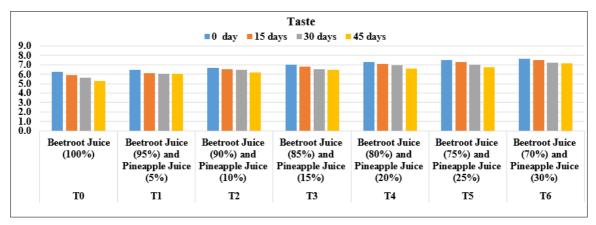


Fig 5: Organoleptic evaluation -taste of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

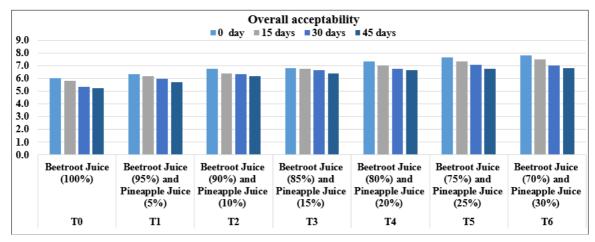


Fig 6: Organoleptic evaluation -overall acceptability of beetroot and pineapple blended RTS during storage period.

Conclusion: The sensory evaluation of beetroot-pineapple RTS beverages demonstrated that blending significantly improved colour, appearance, flavour, taste, and overall acceptability compared to pure beetroot juice. Among the treatments, the 70% beetroot + 30% pineapple blend (T_6) consistently received the highest scores at preparation and throughout storage, followed by the 75% beetroot + 25% pineapple juice blend (T₅) emerged as the most acceptable blend. In contrast, pure beetroot juice (T₀) was least acceptable across all parameters. Although all treatments showed a gradual decline in sensory quality during 45 days of storage, blends containing higher pineapple proportions maintained superior acceptability. These findings indicate that incorporating pineapple juice (20-30%) into beetroot RTS enhances sensory quality and storage stability of beetroot-based RTS beverages, making them more appealing to consumers and confirm the potential of beetroot-pineapple blends as a nutrient-enriched RTS beverage.

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