

CONSUMER ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS BUYING OPEN MILK IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Open milk is subject to adulteration and threatens public health. Despite the health experts' warnings, many consumers in Turkey still prefer milk sold by street vendors. This study investigated families' open milk (street milk) and packaged milk consumption habits and the reasons for consuming open or packaged milk in Bursa, Turkey. The data were obtained through a face-to-face survey of 478 families. Research revealed that 34.6% of adults and 66% of children regularly consume milk. Participants who consumed milk consumed it for bone development (38.1%) and a rich protein source (22.7%). Half of those (45%) who did not drink milk were not accustomed to drinking milk. %13.8 did not like the taste, and %13.5 is allergic to dairy products. People primarily bought milk from markets (41.1%) and street vendors (21.1%). They preferred whole milk (29.7%) and semi-skimmed milk (29.0%). Reasons for purchasing open milk were freshness (31.1%) and no additives (24.0%). Reasons for not buying open milk were unhygienic (40.7%) and not being subject to quality control (41.7%). Although its sales are decreasing, open milk purchases continue. Open milk sales should be restricted, and packaged milk options offered to consumers should be increased.

Key words: consumer choice, milk drinking habits, open milk, packaged milk, street milk, street vendors

INTRODUCTION

Milk is an essential food item that humans should consume for a healthy life. Milk is the primary protein, vitamin, and mineral source; it is precious and indispensable for babies, children, and individuals. Recent clinical and biochemical studies have shown that milk consumption, especially low-fat milk, effectively reduces hypertension, dental diseases, colon cancer and heart diseases [8, 45]. According to the FAO, the consumption of dairy products differs significantly from region to region and between countries in the same region, depending on dietary habits, available milk processing technologies, market demand and social and cultural development. The per capita consumption of milk and dairy products is higher in developed countries, and demand for milk and dairy products in developing countries is experiencing an increase due to increased income, population growth and urbanisation. This upward trend is evident in East and Southeast Asia, China, Indonesia and Vietnam. The most consumed dairy product in

the world is raw milk. In Europe and North America, the total per capita demand for fresh dairy products is declining. However, the demand composition has shifted towards low-fat cow's milk over the past few years [36].

Turkey's milk and dairy product consumption has shown an unwelcome change in recent years, which is pretty low compared to European and other developed countries. Milk consumption in Turkey is mainly concentrated on cheese and yoghurt. The per capita consumption of drinking milk is over 100L in Northern European countries; it is 92.7L in the European Union, 79L in Canada and 74.7L in the USA, 132.0L in Russia and 23.9L in China [36]. This rate is estimated to be 40.7L in Turkey [26].

Reliable data on the amount and value of milk and dairy products supplied by marketing methods other than industrial products in Turkey is unavailable. However, it is estimated that in the calculations made using the amount of milk received and processed by the milk industry, approximately 20% of the milk produced is not recorded. The raw milk distribution figures reveal that most milk is

not processed technologically. About 25% of the raw milk produced is consumed in the production unit, 10% is breastfed to animals, and 5% is wasted, so only 60% of the total milk is available for marketing purposes. Approximately 40% of this available milk is delivered to the consumer as raw milk (street milk/open milk). The rate of milk processed in modern enterprises is approximately 20%, and the rate of milk processed in dairy farms with low hygienic conditions is another 40%. In developed countries, the milk consumed, breastfed or lost in the enterprise is 2-3%, and the rate of raw milk marketed is 97-98%. The portion of this 97-98% reaches the consumer unprocessed is 5-6%. In Denmark, Holland, and Ireland, the milk processed in modern enterprises is 99.5% [1].

Numerous consumer research also determined that up to 80% of families in Turkey use open milk (street/raw milk). However, it is known by many consumers that water and other additives that threaten human health are mixed into street milk. Turkey's per capita processed and packaged milk consumption is also far behind other European countries. For example, while packaged milk consumed per capita is approximately 6L per year in Turkey, this amount is 139L in Finland, 108L in Spain, 100L in England and 65L in Greece [1].

Many consumers throughout Turkey consider packaged long-life milk dead milk due to the heat treatment applied. Again, some consumers believe that antibiotics and antiseptic substances are added to the packaged, long-lasting milk to provide durability during processing and that the packaging materials used are carcinogenic [4]. On the other hand, street milk is seen as the "purest", "most natural", and "freshest milk" by the vast majority of consumers. Despite the prohibition of street milk, the most important reasons it is still consumed are economic factors such as consumer habits, price and income [44]. However, another study emphasised that the consumption of both open milk and packaged milk is very closely related to the prejudices and thoughts of consumers and that consumer prejudices are more

effective in milk consumption than socio-economic and demographic factors [1].

The COVID-19 outbreak has increased demand for milk and dairy products in Turkey, as in the rest of the world. The demand for dairy products, especially UHT (Ultra High Temperature) milk and cheddar cheese, has increased. In this process, the importance of packaged food was indisputably understood, and there was a significant increase in the demand for packaged dairy products [36].

Despite the importance of milk, studies examining the milk consumption habits of consumers have been scarce. A limited number of studies have only revealed per capita milk consumption amounts and the consumed open and packaged milk rates. However, current studies have not addressed why consumers prefer or avoid open milk or packaged milk.

This study was designed to determine the milk consumption patterns of households in Bursa, the largest city in the Southern Marmara Region, and the reasons for using open and packaged milk. Regarding population size, economic development and immigration potential, Bursa is one of the major cities in Turkey. The result of the research will provide valuable insight into determining the factors that shape the preference for open and packaged milk and products and information on consumer awareness. The study will also benefit dairy enterprises and their marketers operating in the sector, making significant contributions to sectoral stakeholders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary data in the study consists of face-to-face surveys with households living in the Bursa province of Turkey. Bursa is the fourth most populous city in Turkey, with 3,147,818. The population comprises 35% young, 51% middle-aged and 14% older adults. The average household size in Turkey is 3.30 people, and the total number of households is 25,329,833. The average household size of a Bursa is 3.24 people, and the total number of households is 966,765 [40]. The survey was conducted with the person responsible for

food shopping in the family. If the person who does the shopping in the family does not consume milk, the family members were asked to answer the questionnaire considering the people who consume poultry. Semi-structured questionnaires were used in the study. The 2021 population of Bursa province and the number of households were taken into account to determine the sample size. A probabilistic simple sampling method was used in sampling. Interviews were conducted with 480 people. The participants' consent was obtained before implementing the survey, and they were ensured that the information provided would only be used for academic purposes. Two questionnaires were disabled due to missing data, and 478 questionnaires were processed. The survey consists of 22 questions. The first ten questions in the survey are aimed at determining the demographic characteristics of the participants. Twelve questions are about determining the milk consumption of the participants. The data were analysed using the SPSS 23.0 Package Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic results

The research aimed to interview people who did more than half of household essential food shopping. Half of the participants were women (50.9%), and half (49.1%) were men. Contrary to small settlements, food shopping in metropolises is not left to women but is also done by men. A quarter of the participants (26.2%) were families of two people, while half (52.6%) were families of 3 or 4. This meant families had 1 or 2 children. In short, a significant portion of the participants (78.8%) had a nuclear family. In the study by Erdal and Tokgöz [12], which examined the factors affecting the consumption preferences of packaged and open milk, 77% of the participants were nuclear families. A significant part of the participants (68.8%) was married. Ages were fairly proportionally distributed among the groups studied. While the participants under the age of 40 are 43.9%, the participants over

40 are 56.1%. About half (46.8%) of the people interviewed in the study are university graduates. In the present study, a small portion of the participants were housewives (11.9%) and retired (16.6). Most participants work for the state or private sector or own businesses (13.6%). 32.1% of the participants earn 6,000TL or more. Demographic findings of the families examined are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic profile of the participants.

Variable		N	%
Gender	Male	234	49.0
	Female	43	50.8
Marital Status	Single	149	31.2
	Married	329	68.8
Age	20-30	110	23.0
	31-40	100	20.9
	41-50	93	19.5
	51-60	89	18.6
	61≥	86	18.0
Income*	>2 ,825 TL	108	22.6
	2,826 -4,000	48	10.0
	4,001-6,000	168	35.1
	6,001-8,000	52	10.9
	8,001+	102	21.2
Education level	Literate	13	2.7
	Primary	164	34.3
	Secondary	115	24.1
	University	224	46.9
Household Size	1	46	9.6
	2	125	26.2
	3	120	25.1
	4	132	27.6
	5+	55	11.5
Professional activity	Housewife	57	11.9
	Retired	79	16.5
	State worker	118	24.7
	Blue collar	75	15.7
	Self-employed	65	13.6
	Student	12	2.5
	Unemployed	31	6.5
Other	41	8.6	

Turkey's minimum Legal Basic Salary was Gross 2,943 Turkish Lira (TL) and Net 2 324 TL in 2020. N=478
Source: Author's calculation.

Milk consumption

Every member of the family should consume milk. However, studies conducted in Turkey and health experts often emphasise that individuals do not consume enough milk. Consumers buy milk for both individual and family consumption. Many factors, such as the presence of a child in the family, elderly individuals in the family and health problems, can affect milk consumption. For this reason, the participants were asked whether they or their family members drank milk regularly. The findings are given in Table 2.

Alarmingly, only 34.6% of the participants regularly consume milk. 34.7% of the participants stated that their spouses consume

milk. 37% of other family members, such as elderly parents, consume milk. Studies conducted in Turkey show that milk consumption as drinking milk is deficient. In the survey conducted by Şimsek et al. [34] with 1,000 people in Istanbul, 33% of the participants consumed milk. Onurlubaş and Çakırlar's [29] research revealed that 47.3% of women and 52.7% of men did not consume milk in the three largest cities of Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir). Whereas in Chile, 84% of respondents consume milk [43].

Table 2. Regular milk consumption in a family

	Do you consume milk regularly?			
	Yourself	Your spouse/partner	Children	Other family member
Yes	165	130	179	68
No	313	216	103	130
No children	-	-	196	-
No spouse	-	132	-	-
No other family member	-	-	-	279
Weekly milk consumption	0.78	0.69	1.18	0.44
Total	478	478	478	478

Source: Author's calculation.

Milk and milk products play an essential role in the healthy development of bones and teeth, especially in children and adolescents, in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, stroke, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, and in the management of body weight in adults, due to having calcium content [18]. Turkish Nutrition Guide [38], prepared by the Ministry of Health, recommends taking three servings of milk and dairy products daily. (1 serving of milk: 240 mL, one serving of yoghurt: 200 mL, one serving of feta cheese: 60 g). However, 66% of the participants who had children in our study consumed milk regularly. Nahcivan's [25] study also confirmed that 45.2% of children aged 6-14 drank a glass of milk daily, and 31.8% drank milk occasionally. Toptaş Bıyıklı and Akman's [37] study also reported low-level milk drinking by children: the rate of primary school students aged between 10-15 who consume milk every day was 55.7%. In the current study, child milk consumption rates are higher than in other studies in Turkey, but

they are far behind developed countries. A study conducted on individuals aged 60 and over in the USA reported that 30.8% of adolescents (12-19 years) consumed three glasses of milk or more per day [10].

Milk consumption levels

Average monthly milk consumption *per capita* is around 3.1L *per month* and around 37.2L *per year*. Households in Bursa consume 3L of milk *per week*, 12L *per month* and 156L *per year*. Although these figures are meagre, they align with the TurkStat data. According to TurkStat [40] data, Turkey's average annual milk consumption *per capita* was 39.5±7L.

Existing studies have reported similar results. In a recent Engindeniz et al. [11] survey, annual milk consumption *per capita* was 37.43L. Karakaya and Akbay [19] calculated that the average consumption of drinking milk *in the families* studied was 12.19L, and *per capita* consumption was 36.75L. This study and other available research findings also confirm the low milk-drinking rates in Turkey [1, 7, 9,12,14].

In recent years, the mass media has encountered contradictory statements in Turkey about milk consumption. Many health experts claim that consuming milk in adulthood is neither beneficial nor harmful. Besides the studies confirming the health benefits of milk, Michaëlsson et al. [24] showed that hip fractures were 60% more common in those who drank more than three cups of milk a day compared to those who drank less than a glass of milk a day and in their research in Sweden. The same study also revealed that cow's milk increased the risk of dying from a heart attack by 15% and cancer by 7% in women. According to this study, those who drank more than three glasses of milk a day had a 93% greater risk of dying from cancer than those who drank less than one glass. Several available studies argue that the risk of prostate cancer in men [23, 35] and ovarian cancer in women [16, 22] who drink plenty of milk is significantly increased compared to the non-drinking group. According to Campbell and Campbell [4], milk is one of the most harmful foods. In their research, Campbell and Campbell [4]

emphasised that *casein*, the primary protein substance of milk, is a severe carcinogen. The substance called *casomorphin* is released from the breakdown of casein and affects the brain. This is a kind of "morphine" derivative and increases the dependence on milk and dairy products. In addition to all these, it is reported that milk intolerance causes skin problems such as acne, rash and redness or irritation. These and similar studies adversely affect the already low milk consumption, adding to expert opinions.

In the current study, adult participants and their spouses consume around 0.6-0.7L of milk per week, while children's milk consumption is 1.2L. Older parents consumed less than 0.5L of milk per week. According to the Ministry of Health Turkey Health and Nutrition Survey [39], milk consumption per capita is 34.5 mL per day and 12.5L per year for people over 15 in Turkey. Current research findings coincide with the upper limits for adults and the lower limits for the elderly.

Frequency of milk consumption

Children pattern themselves on their parents in nutrition and milk-drinking habits. Research has shown that only 12% of family adults regularly drink milk daily.

Children whose parents did not have the habit of drinking milk did not drink milk either. 32% of the children of the participants drank milk every day.

One-third of adult participants drank milk several times a week, while 20-25% drank milk several times a month. 15.6% of individuals of older ages did not drink milk at all, whereas the necessity of milk for bone health is often emphasised (Table 3).

Current research shows that individuals in Bursa province drank less milk than stated in the literature. Participants generally consumed milk once every 2-3 days (33.6%) and once a week (33.4%) in Karakaya and Kızıloğlu's [20] research. The rate of those who consumed daily was 19.9. Niyaz and İnan [27] found that 16.3% of the consumers drank milk daily, 28.3% several times a week, 11.4% every two weeks, 21% once a month and 22.9% rarely consumed milk.

However, 44% of the individuals interviewed in Chile drank milk daily, while 30% drank milk three times a week and 19% once a week [43].

Table 3. Frequency of drinking milk

	Yourself		Spouse		Children		Elderly	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Several times a day	17	3.6	6	1.7	32	11.3	4	2.0
Once a day	58	12.1	35	10.1	90	31.9	20	10.1
Several times a week	160	33.5	108	31.2	75	26.6	60	30.3
Several times a month	115	24.1	74	21.4	35	12.4	40	20.2
Seldom	102	21.3	84	24.3	22	7.8	43	21.7
Do not drink milk	26	5.4	39	11.3	28	9.9	31	15.7
No spouse			132	28.2				
No kids					196	41.0		
No elderly							280	58.6
Total	478		478		478		478	

Source: Author's calculation.

Reasons for consuming and not consuming milk

Individuals drink milk because they believe it is healthy, giving it to their children. A significant portion of the 273 participants who have the habit of consuming milk consumes it because they believe that milk is beneficial for bone development (38.1%) and health and is a rich source of protein (22.7%) (Table 4).

Table 4. The reason for consuming milk regularly.

	N	%
A rich source of protein	62	22.7
Necessary for bone health	104	38.1
Necessary for child development	47	17.2
No particular reason, just habit.	44	16.1
Other	12	4.4
Health	2	0.7
Helps with weight loss	2	0.7
Total	273	100%

Source: Author's calculation.

Demircan et al. [9] stated that 65.3% of consumers drink milk because it is healthy. About half of the participating families in the current research did not have children. For this reason, the rate of those who said they consumed milk because it was essential for child development remained at 17.2%. It is evident in the research that habits affect consumption. Very few of the participants (16.1%) consume milk by habit. Consumers in Australia [4] and Chile [43] give more importance to sensory characteristics such as taste, odour and colour in milk consumption,

while consumers in Turkey give more importance to its health benefits [3].

The most important reason for *not* consuming milk was not having the habit of drinking milk. About half (45%) of those who did not drink milk regularly did not have the habit of it. Experts emphasise that parents should encourage their children to get into the milk-drinking habit for healthy development. When asked individuals who did not consume milk the reason for not drinking it, 51.5% of consumers stated that they were not in the habit of drinking it, 31.8% said they did not like it, and 10.6% for health problems.

Milk has a unique taste and distinct smell. Some people find this taste and smell particularly appealing, while others dislike it. In the study, those who did not like the smell of milk were relatively few (7.6%), but it is noteworthy that those who were allergic to milk and felt stomach discomfort after drinking milk made up a quarter of all participants (25.1%) (Table 5). Milk consumption in Turkey is still deficient, so children develop lactose intolerance and digestion problems early. Studies show that a quarter of children between the ages of 5 and 11 refuse to drink milk.

Table 5. The reason for not consuming milk regularly.

	N	%
Don't like the taste	45	13,8
Don't like the smell	25	7,6
Upsets my stomach	38	11,6
I am allergic to dairy products	44	13,5
It is expensive	16	4,9
No particular reason, it's just not in my habits	147	45,0
Can't find fresh milk	1	0,3
Other	11	3,4
Total	327	100,00

Source: Author's calculation.

Open milk vs packaged milk

The debate on open milk and packaged milk consumption in Turkey has been ongoing for many years. Some health experts state that processed milk loses its nutritional value; therefore, unprocessed (open milk) should be consumed. Another group states that open milk is ideal for bacteria growth and cheating, and processed milk should be consumed. Resultantly, consumers, especially those with

children, are exceedingly confused about how to consume milk. Families with children prefer street milk to provide their children with milk without additives, while those with allergic children prefer processed/package milk. Many consumers have chosen to purchase open milk, believing that all vitamin values are lost when pasteurised milk undergoes heat treatment. Packaged milk contains preservatives and is less healthy. They even believed their elders were fed with open milk and lived healthier than they were. Individuals in the high-income group prefer to buy milk packaged from markets and supermarkets. In contrast, low- and middle-income individuals get their milk primarily raw from milkmen [31]. In a study conducted in Kenya and Tanzania, where household incomes were low, consumers only bought packaged milk without raw milk [13]. Van Rossum et al. [42] also stated that high-income individuals prefer low-fat milk and dairy products sold in packages. Another study expressed that high-income families especially found it costly to cook and store open milk in their homes, so packaged milk is more economical for them [12].

The rate of consumption of raw milk (i.e. buying from street vendors) starts from 40% in Turkey. It can go up to 70%, especially in the eastern and central Anatolian regions [1, 12, 30]. Cities are smaller in these regions. Many family farms produce and sell open milk in the region, or consumers have acquaintances who live in the village and can order milk directly. Chain markets in these cities are yet widespread. Dairies, corner shops and bakeries also sell open milk.

Consumers in metropolitan areas use more processed packaged milk [18, 28, 33]. Processed milk is usually sold in small (1L, 0.5L) packages. Families being smaller in big cities, having more markets around, and having fewer milk producers in the neighbourhood increase the consumption of packaged milk compared to rural areas.

In addition to the frequency and quantities of open or processed milk consumed, ease of shopping, getting all needs from one place, cheapness, promotion, delivery, social

facilities, and so on may affect where we purchase the milk [30]. While open milk is generally obtained from the street seller (milkman), dairy and bazaars, processed (pasteurised and sterilised) milk is obtained from local and national markets and corner shops [2]. Street selling is a significant problem in Turkey's dairy sector and holds a non-negligible place in the current research. 21.1% of the participants buy their milk from street vendors, and 6.3% from a local dairy. In other words, one-third of the participants consume unprocessed milk (34.3%). About half of the participants bought processed milk (41.4%) from national markets. Those who bought from local markets and corner shops made up one-third (31.2%) of the participants (Table 6).

Table 6. Where do you buy milk the most?

	N	%
Street vendor	101	21.1
Grocery /corner shop	63	13.2
Local dairy	30	6.3
Local market	86	18.0
National market	198	41.4
Total	478	100.0

Source: Author's calculation.

Small cities and towns commonly have local dairy. From here, consumers can buy milk and essential dairy products (yoghurt, cheese and curd) daily. However, finding such dairy in big cities is getting harder because these small businesses cannot compete with chain stores [32]. Today's consumers mostly use chain stores for food shopping. Milk consumed daily and regularly should be purchased frequently from local markets and grocery stores. Consumers in Turkey generally shop for vegetables and fruits at the local markets, while they do their durable food and other shopping at national markets once a week. Consumers typically consume milk in processed form and buying approximately half of it from national markets confirms the low frequency of milk purchases [20, 29].

Parallel to the findings in Table 6, only 22.2% of the participants consumed open milk. Half bought the milk in a carton box (UHT) (50.4%). Consumers who prefer pasteurised milk can buy it in glass bottles or plastic bags.

Consumers were more sensitive about the use of plastic and preferred daily (4.4%) or processed milk (3.8%) relatively less in plastic packaging. The rate of consumers who preferred packaged products is around 75% (Table 7). SETBIR (Turkish Dairy, Meat and Food Industrialists and Producers Association) confirms that consumers prefer packaged products, which they rightly think are cleaner and hygienic, due to the coronavirus epidemic in 2020 and beyond.

Studies conducted in Turkey, both in metropolitan and rural areas, stated that open milk purchased from street vendors is still widely sold and preferred. This study confirmed that open milk consumption in Bursa province was much lower than in the current studies [34].

Table 7. What is the main type of milk you usually buy?

	N	%
Raw milk (milkman/dairy)	106	22.2
Semi-skimmed milk	142	29.7
Whole milk	141	29.5
Skimmed milk	15	3.1
Lactose-free milk	21	4.4
Raw + semi-skimmed	14	2.9
Raw + whole milk	13	2.7
semi-skimmed + Whole milk	14	2.9
semi-skimmed + lactose-free	6	1.3
Other buying combinations	6	1.3
Total	478	100

Source: Author's calculation.

Because access to open milk is more difficult in metropolitan areas, participants had higher educational levels, and fewer children led to this outcome. However, pasteurised milk consumption was also lower than in the current research. Participants generally preferred long-lasting UHT milk. This finding is consistent with existing studies [18, 19]. Consumers take the milk raw in the open, use it for drinking, making yoghurt and food, or prefer it as a long-lasting product in a cardboard box. It is seen that the use of pasteurised milk has not become widespread in Turkey yet.

The fat ratio in milk is a decisive factor in choosing low-fat milk types [16, 43]. Vargas-Bello-Pérez [43] states that 75% of consumers in Chile prefer low-fat milk. In a study

examining the consumption of dairy products by adults in Switzerland, 53% of the participants prefer low-fat products to reduce their daily fat and calorie intake [6]. Another dairy consumption study by Cashel et al. [5] showed that older women prefer to skim or low-fat milk more than younger women. Bus and Worsley [4] and Johansen et al. [17] stated that women's full-fat milk consumption rate is lower than men's and emphasised that women attach more importance to fat ratios and weight control than men. Hammarlund [15] showed that most dairy consumers prefer skimmed milk. Then they prefer 2% fat milk, 1% fat milk, and finally whole milk. A study examining the consumption of milk and dairy products by participants over the age of 60 in the USA reported that the majority of the elderly pay great attention to their fat intake and cholesterol-rich foods, and most of the elderly prefer 2% fat milk consumption [10]. However, the opposite is the case in Turkey. Open milk is full-fat. One-third of the consumers who preferred packaged milk chose whole milk, and half of the participants consumed whole milk. While the other third preferred semi-skimmed milk, skimmed milk consumption was deficient (3.1%). This finding was confirmed by Engindeniz et al. [11] study that households consumed whole milk (44.3%) more. Twentify [41] reports that the rate of those who prefer lactose-free milk in milk consumption besides open and packaged milk preferences is 17%, but the use of lactose-free milk in this study remained at 4.4%. Lactose-free milk is a type with a sweeter taste produced for people who do not like milk and cannot drink it. Dieters also prefer lactose-free milk. The high use of whole milk and the low use of lactose-free and diet milk indicate that consumers in Turkey did not count calories in milk.

Reasons for consuming open milk

Even though expert warnings and widespread concerns regarding open milk use, consumers do not give up on open milk. Open milk sales are more common in small cities close to rural areas; they gradually decrease in big cities. Nevertheless, sales continue. Freshness (31.3%) and unprocessed, having no additives

(24%) were among the most prominent public preferences for buying open milk (Table 8). Street vendors usually live in nearby villages and typically sell their milk. Alternatively, they buy the milk directly from the farm and sell it.

Table 8. If you are using loose milk, what is the reason?

	N	%
Freshness	82	31.3
No additives	63	24.0
Taste	46	17.6
Low price	32	12.2
Home delivery	18	6.9
Ease of payment	16	6.1
Weighed by the buyer	5	1.9
Total	262	100

Source: Author's calculation.

Thus, the buyer knows which farmer produced milk on which farm. There are concerns about bacterial reproduction in milk in countries with hot climates, such as Turkey. However, there are also concerns about enterprises' processing, storage, and packaging conditions. Negative news in the media on those matters prevents people from switching from open milk to packaged milk. Open milk is cheaper than packaged processed milk, but one of its most substantial advantages is being bought in desired quantities. The milk comes to the door and is poured and weighed in front of the consumer. In the current research, participants belonged to the relatively high-income group, generally working people. So above mentioned convenience that open milk offers were irrelevant to them.

The most important reasons consumers prefer street milk are habits and misleading and incomplete information about packaged milk. In addition, the majority of consumers see street milk as "the purest", "most natural", and "freshest milk". On the contrary, many consumers consider packaged long-life milk dead milk due to the heat treatment. Consumers commonly believe that antibiotic and antiseptic substances are added to the packaged, long-lasting milk to ensure longevity and that the packaging materials used are carcinogenic [13]. Remarkably,

families give priority to the factors of being healthy and reliable when they prefer both open and packaged milk.

In the study, the most critical factor that led consumers to buy open milk was the freshness of the milk (31.3%). As emphasised in the literature, the absence of additives is the second most important reason for consumption (24%).

Milk sold in the open may not be completely additive-free, and there may be some adulteration. The most common of these are extracting fat from the milk, adding water, and adding neutralising agents to prevent the development of acidity or to mask the developing acidity. It is forbidden to add preservatives to milk to make it last longer. Nevertheless, hydrogen peroxide, potassium dichromate, formaldehyde, sodium carbonate, salicylic acid, and boric acid are the leading preservatives that are widely used. Despite all these possibilities, literature findings confirm that milk sold in the open is perceived as healthier, additive-free and reliable by consumers [2, 20]. Twentify [41] conducted a study with 1,010 participants, and 60% of consumers think that open milk is more natural and has higher nutritional value than packaged milk. On the other hand, 44% of the participants perceived that their milk was natural and additive-free. Although the literature often emphasises that open milk is preferred over packaged milk because of its lower price, the price was less important in this study and similar studies [2]. As stated before, there is a possibility of adulteration of open milk. Further, its rapid spoilage and bacteria-producing properties, and therefore the possibility of causing disease, are among the reasons that hinder the preference for open milk. In addition, it is not possible to control the milk content sold open and the conditions of sale and distribution. Mass media often broadcast major adulterants added to open milk. Moreover, the summer season in Turkey is generally hot and long, which further accelerates the deterioration of milk in the distribution process. For these reasons, being unhygienic (40.7%) and not being able to carry out health inspections of the milk sold

(41.7) were the main reasons for not using open milk (Table 9). Kibar et al. [21] stated that participants prefer packaged milk more. In this preference, the ease of access and labelling of the products, especially hygiene, emerged as important reasons for preference.

Table 9. If you are NOT using open/street milk, what is the reason?

	N	%
Can't access fresh milk	32	14.8
Not hygienic	88	40.7
No quality/health control	90	41.7
Don't like the taste	2	.9
Loose milk is expensive	4	1.9
Total	216	100.0

Source: Author's calculation.

Reasons for not using packaged milk

Milk is packaged by going through a series of processes in enterprises. Consumers believe that there are chemicals in processed milk and therefore avoid using processed milk. In the current study, the presence of additives in milk (28%) is the most critical factor preventing the use of packaged milk. Although daily milk is sold in glass bottles and plastic packaging, the belief that packaged milk (especially cardboard and plastic boxes) is not fresh is quite common (19.7%). Yoghurt is more common than milk, and families in Turkey can make their yoghurt. Research findings also showed that not being able to make yoghurt is an inherent factor in not buying packaged milk. Similarly, Gözener and Sayılı [14] found that 53.14% of the families surveyed did not prefer packaged milk because they found the price high (59.03%), and no one in the family liked it (42.36%) (Table 10).

Table 10. If you are NOT using packaged milk, what is the reason?

	N	%
Contains additives	61	28.0
More expensive	23	10.6
Not natural	29	13.3
Not fresh/daily	43	19.7
Unable to purchase as much as needed	11	5.0
Not good for children	12	5.5
Cannot make yoghurt	39	17.9
Total	218	100.0

Source: Author's calculation.

CONCLUSIONS

Milk and dairy products are indispensable in human development for their nutritional values. Milk consumption has many benefits and Turkey is an agricultural country with a high milk production amount. Still, when the per capita milk consumption statistics are examined, Turkey is far behind the developed countries. It is necessary to undertake studies to increase milk consumption and raise society's awareness of this issue. The research aimed to determine the factors affecting the consumption of milk and dairy products by consumers living in Bursa, one of the largest provinces of Turkey.

The research region's milk and milk processing industry is more developed than in other provinces. The milk consumption in the Southern Marmara Region, where the province is located, remains above the country average. Despite this, the level of milk consumption in the research area has not reached the developed countries' consumption levels. Consumers who regularly drank milk every day were only 16%. Most consumers, including children, did not have milk-drinking habits. The school milk program is a good instrument that helps children to gain this habit. This programme has been successfully implemented in many countries, especially European Union countries. It was also implemented by the Ministry of Health in Turkey between 2011 and 2018. However, this programme was quietly abandoned in 2018 and needs to be implemented again with the cooperation of dairy enterprises and pupils' families. In this way, starting from a young age, all segments of society can gradually gain the habit of drinking milk-drinking habit.

Some experts' conflicting statements about whether to buy raw or packaged milk, whether or not to consume milk in adulthood and consume milk as a dairy product (buttermilk, kefir, yoghurt) instead of drinking milk lead to confusion. Therefore, health professionals and those who publish such news should be more prudent.

It is vital to carry out studies in Bursa province on the dairy industry's development

and closely follow the technological developments because there is a developed food processing industry. At the same time, agriculture and animal husbandry are intensively carried out on the city's fertile plains. However, local and central governments must support the dairy industry to control the sale of unregistered street milk. The advantages of selling unregistered street milk must be eliminated. In addition, it is necessary to undertake an inspection mechanism to ensure the hygienic milk supply. Many companies have entered the packaged milk market under various brands. The presence of brands brings in competition, but it is evident that consumers do not have enough information about both these brands and packaged milk options on offer. Firms with a high or low market share should offer a price advantage and a wider variety of packaging options to satisfy consumers' preferences.

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