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Gaikwad BV
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Pagarkar AU
 Marine Biological Research Station,
 (Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli)
 Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India

Chogale ND
 Marine Biological Research Station,
 (Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli)
 Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India

Mohite SA
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Chaudhari KJ
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Kudale AS
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Satam SB
 Marine Biological Research Station,
 (Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli)
 Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, India

Bhosale BP
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Sawant NH
 Fisheries Research Unit,
 (Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli) Mulde, Kudal, Dist.
 Sindhudurga on, Maharashtra, India

Correspondence

Gaikwad BV
 College of Fisheries, Shirgaon,
 Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,
 Dapoli, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra,
 India

Effect of washing processes on quality parameters of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.)

Gaikwad BV, Pagarkar AU, Chogale ND, Mohite SA, Chaudhari KJ, Kudale AS, Satam SB, Bhosale BP and Sawant NH

Abstract

Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.) is one of the pelagic shoaling fish mainly landed in huge quantity at Ratnagiri coast. These species of fish have high percent of fat and myoglobin, which effects the quality of surimi produced. The gel strength characteristic of surimi can be improved by using different washing processes. The gel strength characteristic plays important role in preparation of crab/lobsters analogues and other surimi based products. Effect of washing processes *viz.*, conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP) on surimi was compared with unwashed mince (UWM) prepared from Lesser sardine. In the present investigation, surimi were analysed for parameters like gel strength, whiteness, expressible moisture, pH, solubility and organoleptic characteristics. Gels strength of unwashed mince (UWM) and different washing processes like CWP and ASWP were depicted as 28.67, 42.00 and 68.00 g/cm respectively. High values of whiteness and pH with decreasing expressible moisture content was observed in ASWP as compared to others. The results showed that alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP) could improve the gel forming ability of surimi particularly from low quality fatty fish (*Sardinella* spp.).

Keywords: Lesser sardine, washing processes, surimi, gels strength, quality improvement

1. Introduction

Surimi is deboned, washed and stabilized fish mince containing myofibrillar protein added with cryoprotectants and frozen [18]. Surimi is basic raw material for development of various value added products such as crab analogues, scallop analogues, shrimp/lobster analogue, fish ball and other surimi based products. These products have excellent nutritional values and they are available in ready to eat and ready to cook, convenient products to the consumers [25, 24]. Consumer's health can be potentially improved by consumption of health-promoting seafood products. These products have good demand in national and international market [23]. Lean fishes are generally used for surimi production. Presently, the catch of lean fishes from sea is declining due to over exploitation of these fishes and there is urgent need to utilize fatty pelagic fishes for surimi production. Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.) are pelagic, fatty, shoaling fishes, which are landed in huge quantity on Ratnagiri coast of India. These fatty fishes need to be used for the production of surimi for its better utilization. However, problems faced with production of surimi from these fatty fish species, such as Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.) are dark muscle associated with high content of lipid and myoglobin, resulting difficulties in making high quality surimi [11, 14]. The washing technique is used as an important tool to improve the quality of surimi. A huge amount of water is used to remove the water-soluble proteins, blood, fat and other nitrogenous compounds from the minced fish flesh [16].

Washing process shows great significance on final quality of the surimi, which removes sarcoplasmic protein and increases the concentration of the myofibrillar proteins. This increase in myofibrillar proteins improves the ability to gel formation [19, 5]. However, no information is available on effect of washing processes on surimi quality such as, colour, gel strength and other properties from species Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.) caught from Ratnagiri coast. Therefore, in the present study the effect of Lesser sardine surimi prepared from conventional washing processes (CWP) and alkaline saline washing processes (ASWP) compared with unwashed mince and its functional and other gel properties were studied.

2. Materials and methods

Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.) with an average weight of 35-38 g was brought in ice (fish/ice ratio 1:2) condition from the landing center. The fish was washed, drained, dressed, mechanically deboned by mincer with a hole diameter of 5 mm. The minced meat prepared by this process was referred as "Unwashed mince".

This unwashed mince (UWM) added with cryoprotectants (4% sugar and 0.2% polyphosphates) were added and mixed well. UMW was packed in polyethylene bag, sealed and frozen using plate freezer at -40°C [6].

This unwashed minced was further used to study effect of different washing processes on surimi quality.

2.2.2 Preparation of surimi by conventional washing processes

Unwashed mince (UWM) was suspended in cold water (5°C) at a ratio 1:3 (mince/water w/w). The mixture was stirred gently for 4 min and washed mince was filtered with a layer of muslin cloth. The washing process was repeated twice. For the third washing, cold water containing 0.5% NaCl solution [9] was used. Finally, the water was removed from washed minced manually. Then cryoprotectants were added, packed and frozen as prepared surimi previously described. This processes of surimi production was referred as "Conventional washing process surimi" (CWP).

2.2.3 Preparation of surimi by alkaline-saline washing processes

Unwashed mince (UWM) was suspended in cold (5°C) alkaline-saline water (0.15% NaCl in 0.2% NaHCO_3) at a mince/water ratio of 1:4 (w/w) [27]. The mixture was stirred gently for 15 min and washed mince was filtered with a muslin cloth. The washing process was repeated twice. For the third washing, cold water containing 0.5% NaCl solution was used and thereafter water was removed from washed minced manually. Then cryoprotectants were added, packed and frozen as prepared surimi previously described. This process of surimi production was referred as "Alkaline-saline washing process surimi" (ASWP).

The stabilized mince and surimi were stored at -18°C and used for analysis of gel properties.

2.3 Analysis of surimi gels

2.3.1 Textural analysis

Textural analysis of gels was performed using a texture analyser (Rheo Tex Type: SD-700, Japan). Prepared surimi gels were cut into five cylindrical shaped pieces of 2.5 cm in length. The breaking force (gel strength) and deformation (elasticity/deformability) were measured using the texture analyser equipped with a cylindrical plunger (5 mm diameter; 60 mm per min penetration speed). Measurements were taken in triplicates.

2.3.2 Determination of whiteness

Whiteness was measured using whiteness meter (Nippon

Denshoku, color meter ZE-6000; Japan), Measurements of L^* (lightness), a^* (red hue to green hue), and b^* (yellow hue to blue hue) were made on five replicate samples of each gel. The whiteness was calculated using the following equation [2].
Whiteness = $100 - [(100 - L^*)^2 + a^{*2} + b^{*2}]^{1/2}$

2.3.3 Determination of expressible moisture content

Expressible moisture content was measured according to the method of [4] with slight modification.

$$\text{Expressible moisture content (\%)} = 100[(X \times Y)/X]$$

2.3.4 Determination of pH

pH was measured using pH meter (Equiptronic, digital pH meter model EQ- 610). Surimi gel (5 g) was weighed and homogenised with 45 ml of distilled water at a speed of 800 rpm for 1 min and filtered using a filter paper (Whatman paper No. 1). The pH of filtrate was recorded using a pH meter.

2.3.5 Solubility determination

Solubility, 2 g of surimi was mixed with 18 ml of 0.05 M buffer solution (borate buffer solution, pH 8.1 to 11.50), and homogenized at setting 3 min. (Model RQ-127 A; Vasai. India). After waiting for 30 min., the homogenates were centrifuged at $2450 \times g$ for 15 min at 4°C (Hettch, universal 32 R Ref. Centrifuge). Protein concentration of the supernatant was measured by Bradford [8] method.

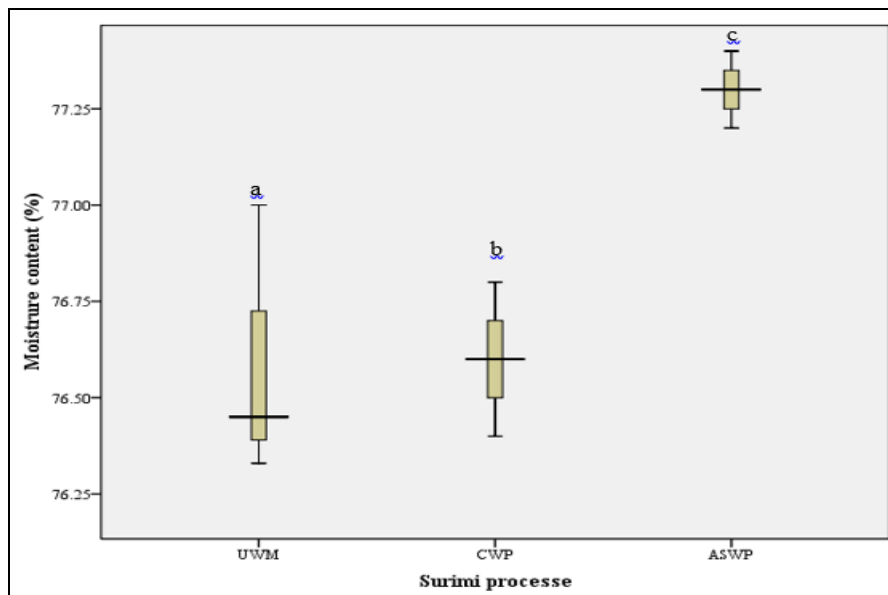
2.3.6 Statistical analysis

All analyses were carried out in triplicates and data expressed as means \pm standard error. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were carried out to assess significant differences between means ($p < 0.05$). Comparison of means was carried out by Student-Newman-Keuls (SNK). Analysis was performed using a SPSS package (SPSS 16.0 for Windows).

3. Result and discussions

3.1 Moisture content of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine, unwashed mince and different washing processes.

ASWP surimi showed slightly higher moisture content (76.30%) followed by CWP (75.60%) and UWM (75.30%) as showed in (Fig.3.1) ($p < 0.05$). Alvarez- Parrilla *et al.* [11] reported moisture contents ranging from 74 to 78% for the surimi is prepared from of horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*) and hake (*Merluccius merluccius*). Fogaca *et al.* [13] found that 75.44% moisture in the surimi prepared from Nile tilapia filleting residues performing three washings with distilled cold water and adding 2% NaCl and 1% saccharose. Increase in moisture content in washed meat may be due to the process of washing. During washing some amount of water is held by the meat as reflected by the increase in moisture percent in washed meat as compared to unwashed meat. The hydrophobic residues of myofibrillar proteins may be responsible for retention of water [12].



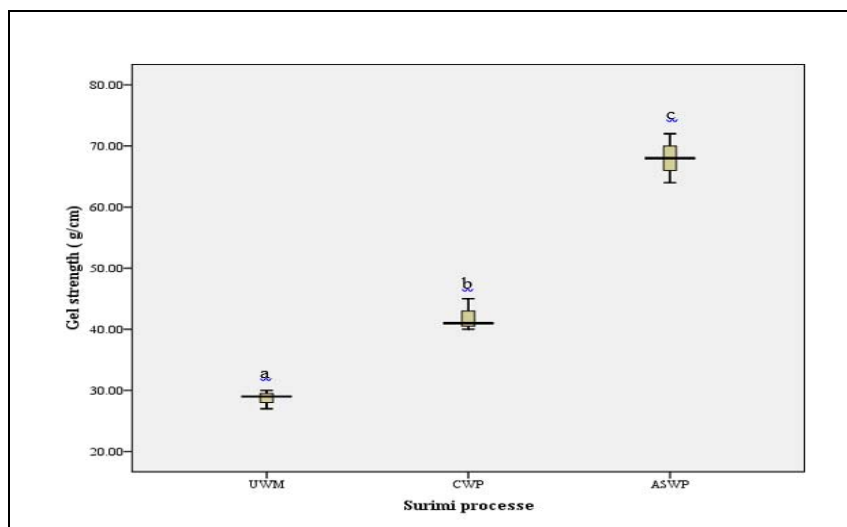
Note: a, b, and c letters on the bars within the same washing treatments indicate the significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

Fig 3.1: Moisture content of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

3.2 Gel strength of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine, unwashed mince and different washing processes

Variation in gel strength was observed in unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP). However, ASWP showed the highest gel strength (68.00 g/cm) followed by CWP and UWM (Fig.3.2) ($p < 0.05$). Similarly slight variation in gel strength was reported by [2]. They found that mackerel surimi gels showed highest breaking force and deformation in ASWPS, followed by CWP and unwashed mince. Therefore,

washing process, particularly alkaline-saline washing, played an important role in the improvement of gel strength of Lesser sardine surimi. Shimizu *et al.* [28] reported that Pacific mackerel mince washed by alkaline-saline leaching method had showed increase in gel strength by 10-fold, as compared with unwashed mince. Only a two to three fold increase in gel strength was found in mince washed by conventional processes. The higher gel forming ability because of myofibrillar proteins having higher MHC, contribute to gel formation [6].



Note: a, b, and c letters on the bars within the same washing treatments indicate the significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

Fig 3.2: Gel strength of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

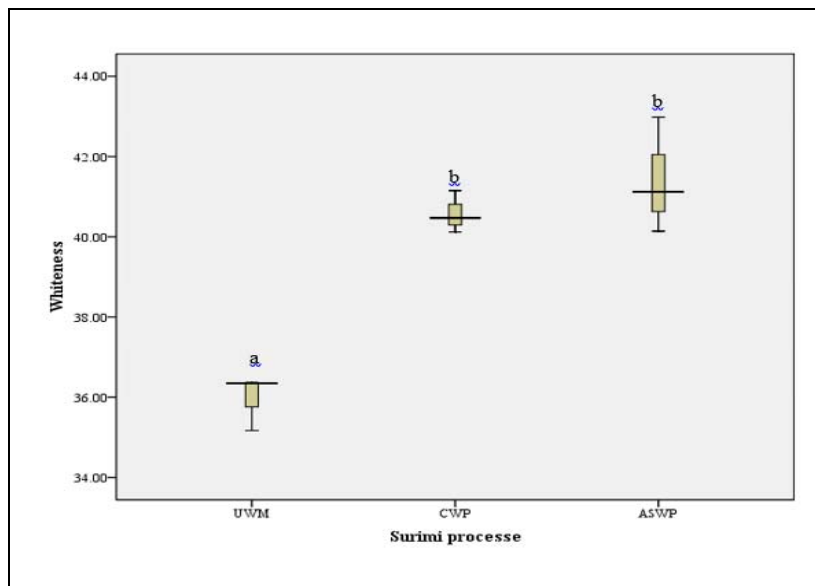
3.3 Whiteness of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine, unwashed mince and different washing processes

Gels prepared from unwashed mince had the lowest whiteness (35.96), compared with those from CWP and ASWP (Fig.3.3). Gel from ASWP was the higher whiteness than that from CWP ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that alkaline-saline

washing process was more effective in removing pigments, especially myoglobin and hemo-globin from the mince than typical washing process. Balange and benjakul [3] reported the alkaline-saline washing process was more effectively for whiteness. The final colour of the surimi is due to the loss of lipids, blood, carotenoids and other pigments during the

washings of the muscle [10]. More washing resulted in the removal of most of the pigment, blood, impurities and

improve the whiteness of the Lesser sardine surimi.



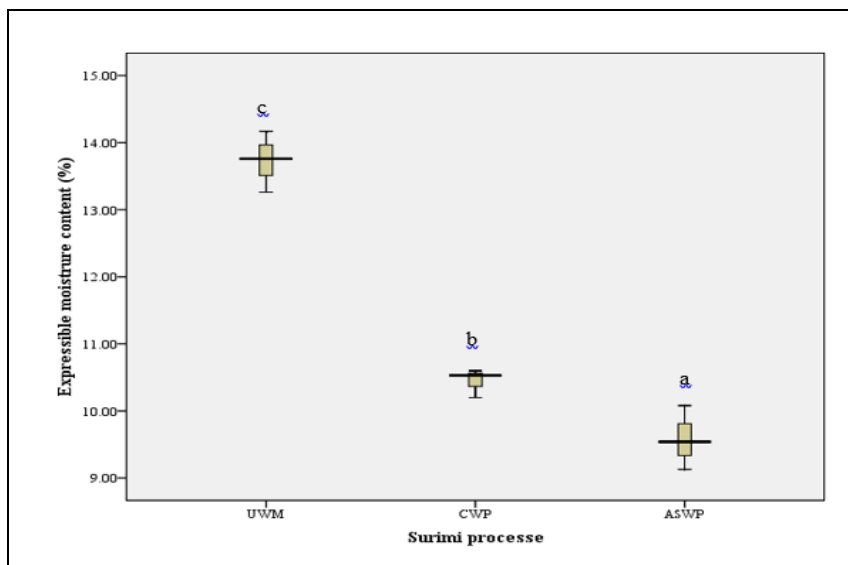
Note: a and b letters on the bars within the same washing treatments indicate the significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

Fig 3.3: Whiteness of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

3.4 Expressible moisture content of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine, unwashed mince and different washing processes

Expressible moisture content of surimi gels prepared from Lesser sardine, unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP) showed lowest expressible moisture content in ASWP followed by CWP and UWM as shown in Fig. 3.4. As

thegel strength increases the expressible water% decreases [30] (Fig.3.2). The results suggested that the formation of stronger network induced by washing processes might imbibe more water. This is in accordance with increase in gel strength and decrease in expressible moisture in the surimi obtained with more number of the washing cycles. This indicates that the quality of surimi gel improved with increasing washing cycles [17].



Note: a, b and c letters on the bars within the same washing treatments indicate the significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

Fig 3.4 Expressible moisture content of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

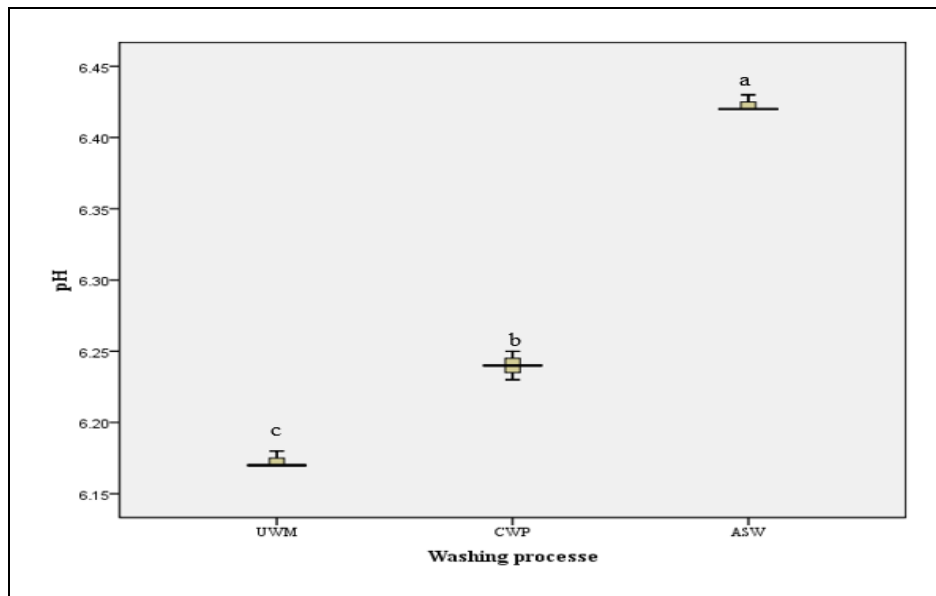
3.5 pH values of gels prepared from unwashed mince and surimi prepared by different washing processes

In present study, surimi prepared by ASWP showed improved pH value (6.42) followed by CWP and UWM were as shown

in Fig. 3.5, ($p < 0.05$). Although Mart in-Sanchez *et al.* [20], state that the use of alkaline saline solution during the washing increases the muscle pH providing greater solubilization and further elimination of the lipids. The

lowered pH of dark fleshed fish during postmortem handling or storage, gradually decreases gel forming ability. Alkaline leaching has been developed to raise the pH of muscle and to

increase the efficacy in removing sarcoplasmic proteins, lipid, pigments, etc. [27].



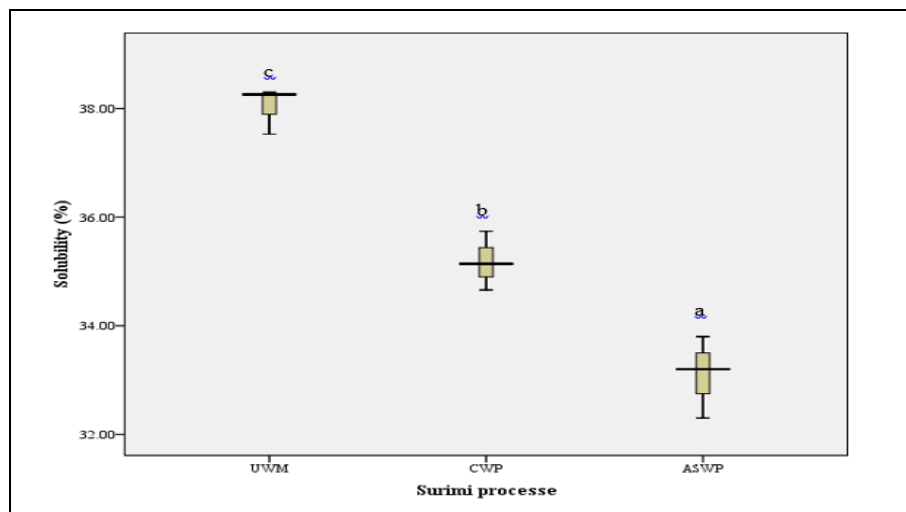
Note: a and b letters on the bars within the same washing treatment indicate the significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

Fig. 3.5 pH of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

3.6 Solubility of gels prepared from unwashed mince and surimi prepared by different washing processes

Solubility was reported to be 38.0, 35.18 and 33.10% in the UNW, CWPS and AWPS, respectively (Fig. 3.6). The decrease in solubility suggests the formation of protein aggregates during setting and heating [2]. Generally washing process removes sarcoplasmic protein. A reduction of 27.77% in total protein was observed after washing which is mainly

contributed by water soluble protein (WSP) reported by [31]. Roussle and Cheffel [26] observed a protein loss 21.27% in European sardine, while Bligh *et al.* [7], Gratnthum [15] found the loss of protein to the extent of 25% due to washing. The loss of myofibrillar proteins during surimi processing could be due to the nature of their water solubility. Wu [32], Stefansson and Hult in [29] reported that myofibrillar proteins solubilize in water and low ionic strength solutions.



Note: a, b, and c letters on the bars within the same washing treatment indicate the significant differences ($P < 0.05$).

Fig. 3.6 Solubility of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

3.7 Organoleptic evaluation of unwashed mince and surimi prepared by different washing processes

Organoleptic evaluation of Lesser sardine surimi gels of unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP) was

evaluated for colour, appearance, odour, taste, texture and overall. A nine-point hedonic scale, in which a score of 1 = not like very much, 5 = neither like nor dislike and 9 = like extremely, was used for evaluation [21]. ASWP had higher score for overall acceptability as compared to other washing

processes as shown in Fig. 3.7. [22] observed that sensory characteristics of mince improved by washing. Twice-washed

surimi samples showed better sensory quality than the single wash.

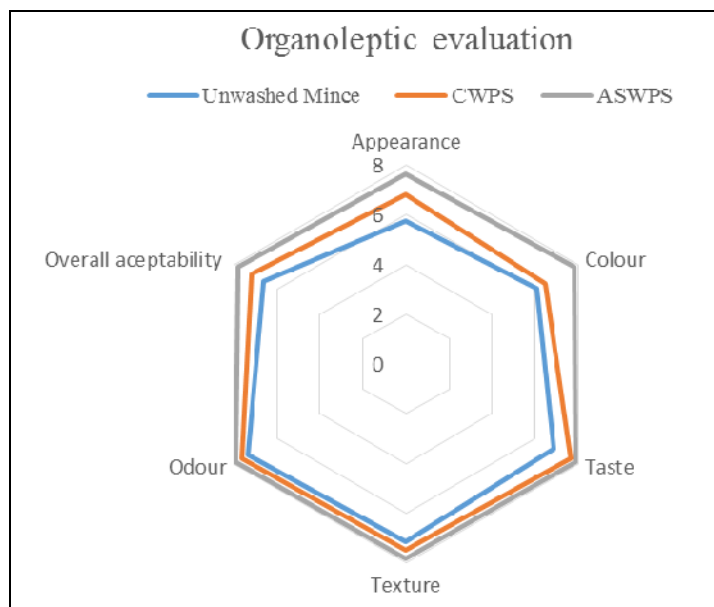


Fig 3.7: Organoleptic evaluation of surimi prepared from Lesser sardine unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP).

4. Conclusion

Variation in gel strength was observed in unwashed mince (UWM), conventional washing process (CWP) and alkaline-saline washing process (ASWP). However, ASWP showed the highest gel strength followed by CWP and UWM. ASWP were found to have better gel strength, whiteness and over all acceptability as compared to other treatments. Therefore, it can be concluded that ASWP washing processes of surimi is ideal process for obtaining a good quality surimi from the Lesser sardine (*Sardinella* spp.).

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