CONSUMER PREFERENCES TOWARD PINDANG CUISINE IN PALEMBANG

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the most important attributes of pindang cuisine based on consumer preferences in Palembang. This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach to examine the characteristics and responses of consumers regarding the purchase of Pindang. The data used in this study consisted of primary data collected through an online questionnaire distributed by Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed between December 2025 to February 2026. The research instrument comprised a structured questionnaire divided into three main sections: respondent profile, pindang purchase behavior, and consumer preference attributes. Consumer preferences for each pindang attribute were determined using a weighted scoring method based on a Likert-scale score. This study involved 356 respondents selected through purposive sampling based on predefined inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were individuals who had purchased or consumed pindang at a pindang restaurant in Palembang within the six months preceding the survey. The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling through an online survey. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively by calculating the frequency, percentage, and average values of the respondents' answers. The result showed that RM. PMR achieved the highest consumer preference score among pindang restaurants in Palembang. This preference is likely associated with its high popularity and strong appeal among consumers. Fish was the main ingredient in pindang at 60.4%, with river catfish (Pangasius pangasius) being the most dominant species at 48.9%. The fish body was the most preferred part because it has thick flesh, a uniform texture, is easy to eat, and has a richer flavor. The health aspect received the highest perception score of 4.92, while taste was the most dominant sensory attribute with a score of 4.92. Additionally, the product factor received the highest importance score with a score of 4.80, indicating that product quality was the primary determinant of consumer evaluations and satisfaction

Keywords: Freshwater Fish, Consumer Preferences, Pindang Palembang, Cultural Identity, Heritage

Introduction

Palembang's signature cuisine is mostly fish-based, ranging from pempek, tekwan, model, laksan, otak-otak, kemplang, and pindang (Surya et al., 2023). Pindang is an iconic dish that has become part of the cultural identity of the people of South Sumatra (Lestari & Yulaini, 2018). Pindang primarily uses freshwater fish such as farmed catfish (Pangasius hypophthalmus), river catfish (Pangasius pangasius), snakehead fish (Channa striata), baung (Hemibagrus nemurus), belida (Chitala lopis), lais (Kryptopterus bicirrhis), toman (Channa micropeltes), and tapah (Wallago leeri), cooked with signature spices including kandis acid fruit, turmeric, lemongrass, galangal, chili, and shrimp paste, resulting in a complex flavor profile that blends sour, spicy, savory, and fresh (Sari et al., 2025; Listiyono et al., 2025). In addition to fish-based pindang, other variations such as those prepared from beef bones, poultry, shrimp, and chicken are becoming increasingly popular among consumers in Palembang as a form of product diversification (Sanaji, 2013). Pindang is not merely a local cooking technique but also a marker of cultural identity, distinguishing Palembang cuisine from other regions. The concept of authenticity in the context of traditional food is central to understanding the relationship between culinary products and the communities that produce them (Mahdani et al., 2025).

The existence of pindang as a signature dish of Palembang serves not only as a form of culinary cultural heritage but also as a source of significant economic value (Syahputra & Moenawar, 2024). The number of pindang restaurants and food stalls in Palembang City continues to increase year after year, ranging from small-scale establishments along the banks of the Musi River to large-scale restaurants in strategic areas such as Jakabaring, Sekanak, Alang-Alang Lebar, Bukit Lama, and Bukit Baru. This indicates that pindang has become a highly sought-after culinary commodity, contributing to growth in the local economy across the culinary and fisheries sectors. Within the framework of local food branding, pindang holds potential as a geographical indication (GI) product that can strengthen Palembang's competitiveness and culinary identity in broader markets. The development of culinary tourism has further positioned pindang as a gastronomic attraction integral to the visitor experience in Palembang (Khalid et al., 2024). However, intensifying competition among pindang restaurant operators necessitates a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior and preferences, enabling businesses to develop targeted marketing strategies.

Consumer preferences are a key factor determining the success of food product marketing. They reflect consumers' attitudes, tastes, and choices regarding various product attributes, such as raw materials, taste,

price, quality, packaging, colour, aroma, and even the place of presentation (Melovic et al., 2020). Sensory attributes play a dominant role in shaping consumer preferences. Previous studies have consistently shown that taste, aroma, colour, and texture are the primary determinants of food product acceptance (Maina, 2018). Authenticity perception has also been identified as a construct that significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions toward traditional food products (Youn & Kim, 2017), with consumers tending to associate authenticity with local ingredients, time-honored recipes, and traditional cooking techniques. Consumer value dimensions, including functional, emotional, social, and epistemic value, are also relevant in understanding why consumers choose specific food products (Rahnama, 2017). Aiman et al. (2017) reported that attributes such as taste, price, product colour, packaging type, and packaging colour are the primary considerations for consumers when purchasing processed fishery products. Meanwhile, Fuliyana and Maria (2022) found that price and taste were significantly correlated with consumer preferences for processed fish products, whereas packaging and texture showed no significant association. Understanding consumer preferences is becoming increasingly important given the rapidly changing lifestyles of urban consumers, particularly in urban areas such as Palembang. Urbanization, rising middle-class incomes, changing dietary patterns, and increasing consumer awareness of health and food quality have shaped increasingly complex and diverse consumer preference patterns (Mulyani & Hartono, 2021). Contemporary consumers consider not only taste and price but also factors such as hygiene, nutritional content, convenience, service, and product image.

Although pindang is an iconic dish of Palembang, scientific studies specifically analyzing consumer preferences for pindang remain relatively limited. Most previous studies have focused on the technical aspects of pindang production (Gabriela & Junianto, 2024), marketing strategies for processed fish products in general (Sinaga & Kusumanti, 2021), or consumer behavior toward Palembang's signature fish-based dishes as a whole, particularly pempek (Hasanah, 2025; Nurfitriana, 2016). Studies focusing on the pindang product attributes that most influence consumer purchasing decisions in Palembang City still require further exploration, particularly in the context of current socio-economic dynamics and culinary culture. Based on the background, research on consumer preferences for pindang cuisine in Palembang City is highly relevant. This study aimed to identify the most important attributes of pindang cuisine based on consumer preferences in Palembang. Thus, the results of this study are expected not only to enrich the body of scientific literature in the fields of food product marketing and fisheries economics but also to provide practical contributions to business operators, consumers, and policymakers in Palembang City and South Sumatra Province.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach to examine the characteristics and responses of consumers regarding the purchase of Pindang. The data used in this study consisted of primary data collected through an online questionnaire distributed by Google Forms to individuals who had purchased Pindang within the previous six months. The questionnaire was distributed between December 2025 to February 2026. A total of 356 respondents were included in this study.

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling through an online survey. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed openly and was not directly supervised, allowing respondents from various locations to access and complete it. However, the eligibility of respondents as research samples was determined through screening questions included in the questionnaire. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively by calculating the frequency, percentage, and average values of the respondents' answers. The research instrument comprised a structured questionnaire divided into three main sections:

1. Section A, Respondent Profile, collected data on respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational level, occupation, monthly income, and purchasing experience.
2. Section B, Pindang Purchase Behavior, examined respondents' usual places of purchase, the main ingredients selected for pindang, and their preferred parts of the fish.
3. Section C, Consumer Preference Attributes, assessed the perceived importance of pindang attributes, including product-related, sensory, and marketing strategy attributes.

Consumer preferences for each pindang attribute were determined using a weighted scoring method based on Likert-scale score, as presented in Table 1. The preference index for each attribute was calculated using the following formula:

$$PI = \Sigma(Si \times Wi) / \Sigma Wi$$

Details:
IP = preference index
Si = average Likert score for the attribute
Wi = attribute importance weight

Table 1. The Likert Scale for Consumer Preference used in this study

Consumer Preferences Index	Consumer Preference Status
1	Not important at all
2	Slightly important
3	Moderately important
4	Very important
5	Extremely important

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

This study involved 356 respondents selected through purposive sampling based on predefined inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were individuals who had purchased or consumed pindang at a pindang restaurant in Palembang within the six months preceding the survey. To ensure that respondents met this criterion, a screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to confirm their experience with consumption. Only individuals who reported having purchased or consumed pindang in Palembang during the specified period were allowed to proceed with the survey. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2. The results show that the majority of respondents were female, totaling 241 individuals (67.70%), while male respondents accounted for 115 (32.30%). The predominance of female respondents should be acknowledged as a limitation of this study, as the gender imbalance in the sample may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of pindang consumers. Previous studies have demonstrated that demographic imbalances in food preference research can produce results that do not fully represent overall consumer behavior (Miftari et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the substantial representation of women in the sample is consistent with evidence indicating that women often play a more active role in household food purchasing and meal-related decision-making processes (Soare et al., 2023; Kraus et al., 2017).

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were between 16 and 30 years old, comprising 213 individuals (59.83% of the sample). The predominance of this younger age group has important implications for interpreting the findings. However, it may be viewed as a positive indication that pindang continues to maintain its relevance among younger consumers, suggesting the persistence of intergenerational transmission of this traditional culinary heritage (Guerrero et al., 2010). On the other hand, the overrepresentation of younger respondents constitutes a significant limitation of the study. As a result, the findings are more likely to reflect the preferences, perceptions, and consumption behaviors of younger consumers rather than those of the entire population of pindang consumers across all age groups. Among the remaining age categories, respondents aged 46–60 years accounted for 20.79% of the sample, while those aged 31–45 years represented 19.38%. The relatively lower representation of older age groups suggests that future studies should seek a more balanced age distribution to improve the representativeness and generalizability of the findings.

Most respondents held a diploma or bachelor's degree, accounting for 75.56% of the sample, followed by high school graduates at 21.91%. This educational profile suggests that the study population was predominantly composed of individuals with relatively high levels of formal education. Previous research has shown that highly educated consumers often exhibit different perceptions of nutrition, food quality, and food safety compared with less educated groups (Chilón-Troncos et al., 2024; van der Merwe et al., 2024). Consequently, the findings related to health perceptions and product quality preferences in this study are more likely to reflect the perspectives of educated urban consumers and should therefore be interpreted with caution when generalizing to the broader population of pindang consumers in Palembang. At the same time, the high educational attainment of respondents highlights the importance of transparency in product information and quality assurance for pindang food business operators. Educated consumers tend to be more selective and critical when evaluating food products, particularly with respect to quality and food safety standards (Soare et al., 2023). In terms of occupation, civil servants represented the largest respondent group, accounting for 84 individuals (23.60%), followed by students (22.47%) and private-sector employees (21.35%). This occupational distribution reflects the heterogeneous socioeconomic composition of Palembang's urban population. The unemployed category accounted for 13.76% of respondents and may include homemakers, who often play a significant role in household food purchasing and consumption decisions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020).

Respondents were divided almost evenly between low-income groups (IDR 0–2,500,000) and middle-income groups (IDR 2,500,001–5,000,000). This indicates that pindang is a dish that transcends economic segments, making it accessible to various groups in society. Its relatively affordable price is one of the main attractions of pindang as a popular dish in Palembang. This finding is consistent with the characteristics of traditional foods, which are generally perceived as a more economical choice compared to modern foods or fast-food restaurants (Soare et al., 2023). The frequency of pindang purchases among respondents indicates that the majority of consumers (38.76%) purchase pindang with moderate frequency, approximately three days per month. Consumers who purchase pindang often (4–5 days per month) and rarely (2 days per month) account for 22.47% and 22.75% of the total, respectively. This distribution indicates that pindang is

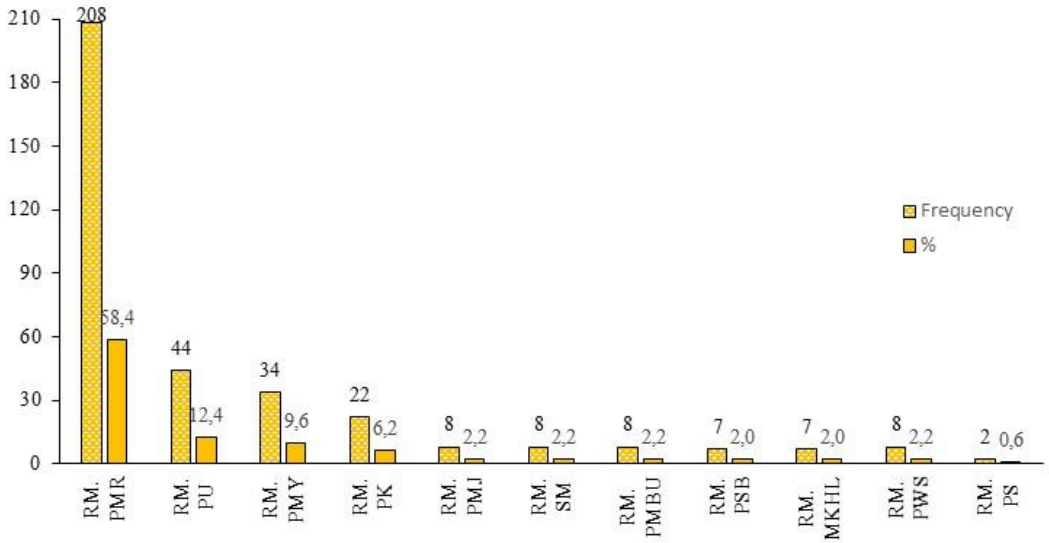
consumed regularly but not daily, suggesting it is not perceived as a staple food. Instead, it appears to function as a periodically consumed specialty dish within the everyday dietary practices of the Palembang community.

Table 2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Pindang Consumers

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	115	32,30
Female	241	67,70
Age (years)		
16-30	213	59,83
31-45	69	19,38
46-60	74	20,79
Education		
Primary School	3	0,84
Secondary School	6	1,69
High School	78	21,91
College	269	75,56
Occupation		
Student	80	22,47
Private Sector	76	21,35
State Owned Enterprise	20	5,62
State Civil Servant	84	23,60
Entrepreneur	25	7,02
Contract employee	22	6,18
Unemployed	49	13,76
Income (IDR/month)		
0 – 2.500.000	124	34,83
2.500.001 – 5.000.000	121	33,99
5.000.001 – 7.500.000	50	14,05
7.500.001 – 10.000.000	25	7,02
> 10.000.000	36	10,11
Purchase experience (day/month)		
Very Often (>5 days)	38	10,68
Often (4-5 days)	80	22,47
Moderately (3 days)	138	38,76
Rarely (2 days)	81	22,75
Very Rarely (1 day)	19	5,34

Consumer Preferences Related to Pindang Consumption

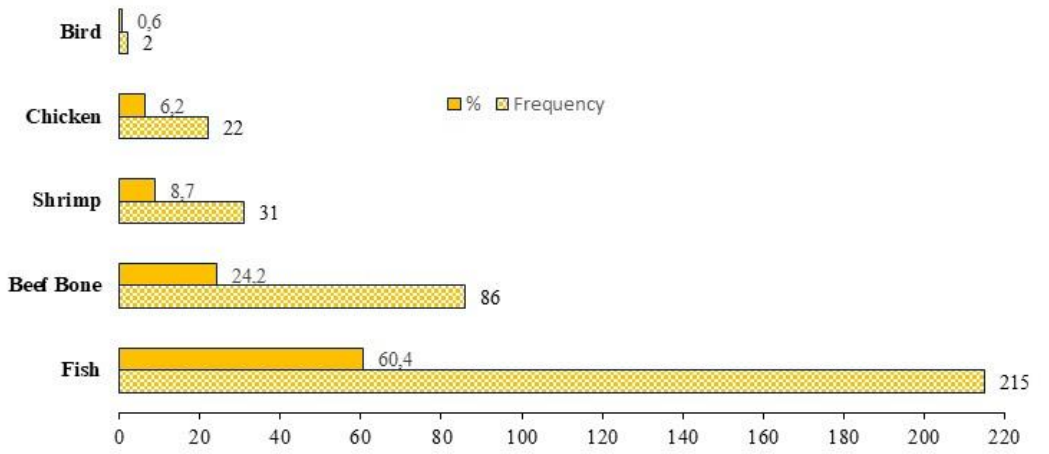
The results of the survey on consumers' preferences for the most frequently visited pindang restaurants show that RM. PMR dominates the choices, with 208 respondents or 58.4% of the total sample (Figure 1). The high proportion of respondents who preferred RM. PMR indicates that the restaurant possesses a strong level of popularity and consumer appeal among the study participants. This preference may be attributed to factors such as consistent product quality, a well-established reputation, and a satisfactory dining experience, all of which are known to influence consumer preferences and restaurant selection decisions. The second most preferred restaurant was RM. PU, selected by 44 respondents (12.4%), followed by RM. PMY with 34 respondents (9.6%) and RM. PK with 22 respondents (6.2%). Preferences for the remaining restaurants were distributed across several establishments, each accounting for less than 2.5% of the total responses. The concentration of consumer preferences among a limited number of restaurants suggests that the pindang culinary market in Palembang exhibits characteristics of an oligopolistic market structure from a consumer preference perspective, whereby a small number of dominant establishments capture a substantial share of consumer preferences (Adelia & Aprianingsih, 2023). This pattern is commonly observed in traditional culinary markets, where word-of-mouth communication and established reputations serve as the primary drivers of consumer choice and business competitiveness (Sukmana et al., 2023).



Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Figure 1. Consumers' Preferences for Pindang Restaurants in Palembang

Pindang is a traditional cuisine originating from Palembang that can be prepared using a variety of main ingredients. The results of consumer preferences regarding the primary ingredients used in pindang are presented in Figure 2. The data indicate that fish is the most preferred main ingredient, selected by 215 respondents (60.4%), followed by beef bones (24.2%), shrimp (8.7%), chicken (6.2%), and poultry (0.6%). The strong preference for fish-based pindang is unsurprising, as the historical development of this dish is closely associated with the Musi River and the wetland ecosystems of South Sumatra, which are rich in freshwater fish resources (Gustiano et al., 2021). Fish-based pindang has become a culinary icon that is strongly associated with Palembang's gastronomic identity (Iskandar, 2021). This finding suggests that fish remains the most culturally authentic and widely accepted ingredient for pindang among consumers. Beef bones were the second most preferred main ingredient, accounting for 24.2% of respondents. This preference is largely attributed to the popularity of "pindang tulang", a traditional spicy and sour soup prepared with beef ribs and marrow-rich bones. The rich and savory flavor of the broth provides a distinctive sensory experience while maintaining the characteristic taste profile of Palembang-style pindang. The relatively high preference for beef bone-based pindang also indicates that consumers appreciate a diverse range of pindang variants and do not exclusively associate the dish with fish-based preparations. In contrast, shrimp and chicken-based pindang were less preferred by respondents. Nevertheless, the presence of these variants reflects the diversification of pindang products within Palembang's culinary landscape. Such diversity may contribute to expanding consumer choices and accommodating varying taste preferences, thereby supporting the continued development of the local pindang culinary industry.



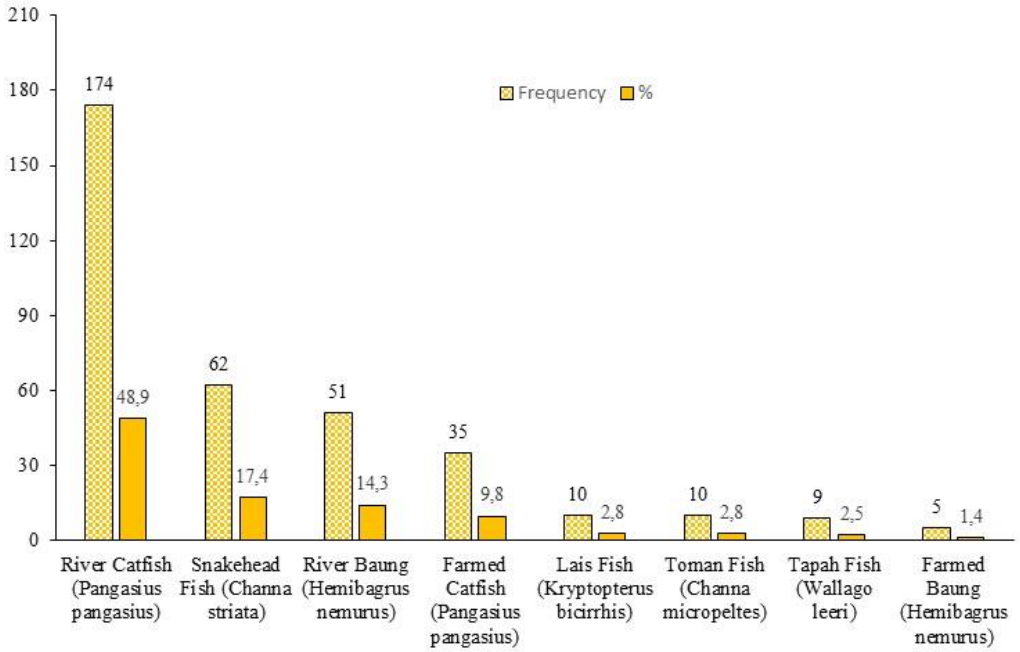
Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Figure 2. Distribution of Consumer Preferences for Main Ingredients Used in Pindang

Among the 356 respondents, preferences for the types of fish used in pindang varied considerably. The results presented in Figure 3 indicate that river catfish (Pangasius pangasius) was the most preferred species, selected by 174 respondents (48.9% of the total sample). Snakehead fish (Channa striata) ranked second, with 62 respondents (17.4%), followed by river baung (Hemibagrus nemurus) at 14.3% and farmed catfish

(Pangasius hypophthalmus) at 9.8%. The strong preference for river catfish may be attributed to its desirable sensory and culinary characteristics. Its flesh is known for being tender, flavorful, and relatively free of small intramuscular bones, making it particularly suitable for preparation in traditional pindang broth. In addition, Pangasius pangasius is an important freshwater fishery commodity and has long played a significant role in the fisheries sector and food culture of South Sumatra (Gustiano et al., 2021). The relatively high fat content of its flesh contributes to a richer flavor and a softer texture, enhancing the overall palatability of the sour and spicy pindang broth. These attributes likely explain its widespread preference among consumers and its prominence in Palembang's pindang culinary tradition.

Snakehead fish (Channa striata), which ranked second in consumer preference, is a freshwater species recognized for its high economic and nutritional value. This species is particularly known for its elevated albumin content, which has contributed to its growing popularity as a functional food among health-conscious consumers (Saputra et al., 2024). In South Sumatra, snakehead fish is widely available in traditional markets, although its market price is generally higher than that of farmed catfish. This price difference may reflect consumer perceptions of superior quality and the premium status often associated with wild-caught fish. Other fish species, including lais (Kryptopterus bicirrhis), toman (Channa micropeltes), tapah (Wallago leeri), and farmed baung (Hemibagrus nemurus), were selected by relatively small proportions of respondents. Nevertheless, the inclusion of these species highlights the rich freshwater fish biodiversity that supports Palembang's culinary heritage. Their continued use in pindang preparation demonstrates the diversity of local fish resources and reflects the adaptability of traditional culinary practices to a wide range of freshwater fish species.

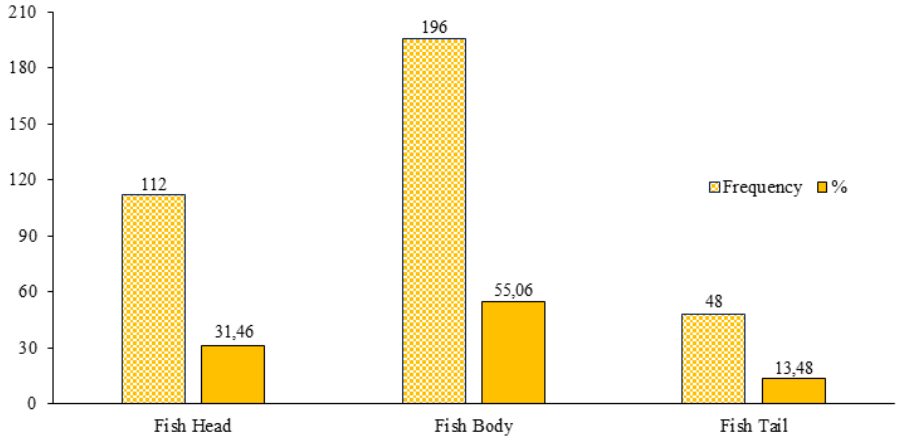


Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Figure 3. Distribution of Consumer Preferences for Fish Species Used in Pindang

This study also investigated consumer preferences for specific fish parts used in pindang dishes. This question was answered by all 356 respondents. The results presented in Figure 4 indicate that the fish body was the most preferred part, selected by 196 respondents (55.06%), followed by the fish head with 112 respondents (31.46%) and the fish tail with 48 respondents (13.48%). The strong preference for the fish body may be attributed to its greater meat yield, more uniform texture, and ease of consumption. In particular, the body portion of river catfish (Pangasius pangasius) contains thick flesh with a relatively high fat content, which contributes to a richer flavor and a more satisfying eating experience. These characteristics likely make it the most desirable portion for consumers.

Interestingly, the fish head was also preferred by a substantial proportion of respondents (31.46%). In the culinary traditions of Palembang, as well as in many Southeast Asian cultures, fish heads are often valued for their rich and distinctive flavor. This characteristic is commonly associated with their higher collagen and gelatin content, as well as the ability of seasonings to penetrate and concentrate more effectively in this part of the fish (Gustiano et al., 2021). Preference for fish heads may also reflect cultural influences and long-standing dietary practices that are deeply embedded in local culinary traditions. In contrast, the fish tail was the least preferred part, accounting for only 13.48% of respondents. This lower preference may be related to its comparatively lower meat content, higher proportion of bones, and less uniform texture, which may reduce its overall appeal relative to other parts of the fish.



Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

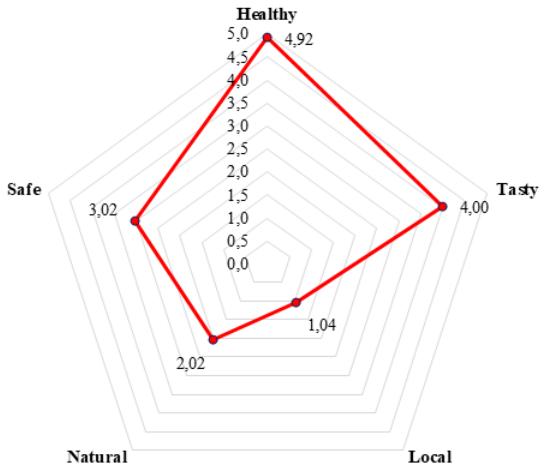
Figure 4. Distribution of Consumer Preferences for Fish Parts Used in Pindang

Consumer Perception of Product, Sensory, and Marketing Attributes

The five attributes evaluated were healthy, tasty, safe, natural, and local. The weighted ranking results are presented in Figure 5. The health attribute received the highest importance score (4.92), indicating that consumers in Palembang strongly perceive pindang as a nutritious and health-promoting food. Previous studies have shown that consumers' perceptions of the healthiness of food products do not always correspond directly to their objectively measured nutritional composition (van der Merwe et al., 2024; Chilón-Troncos et al., 2024). However, the strong perception of health associated with pindang has important marketing implications, as it represents a valuable attribute that can be effectively communicated to consumers. This perception is likely influenced by the traditional ingredients used in pindang preparation. As a fish-based dish, pindang provides a rich source of high-quality animal protein. In addition, it is prepared with a variety of spices and herbs, including turmeric, ginger, and lemongrass, which have been reported to contain bioactive compounds with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. These characteristics may contribute to consumers' positive perceptions of the dish and reinforce its image as a healthy traditional food. Consequently, the perceived health benefits of pindang represent a strategic advantage that may enhance its attractiveness among increasingly health-conscious consumers.

This positive perception of pindang's health benefits should also be interpreted within the broader context of evolving food consumption trends in urban areas. Urban consumers, particularly younger and more highly educated individuals, are increasingly seeking foods that not only provide enjoyable sensory experiences but are also perceived as beneficial to health and well-being (Syahrivar et al., 2024). Consequently, the perception of pindang as a healthy food may contribute significantly to its continued popularity and consumer acceptance. The second-highest rated attribute was tasty, with an average score of 4.00. This finding is consistent with sensory evaluation studies demonstrating that taste is one of the primary determinants of consumer preference and food choice. The strong performance of this attribute highlights the importance of maintaining the distinctive flavor profile of pindang as a key factor influencing consumer satisfaction. The combination of perceived health benefits and favorable sensory characteristics represents a compelling value proposition that can enhance the competitiveness and market appeal of traditional foods in contemporary consumer markets (Syahrivar et al., 2024).

The food safety attribute ranked third, with an importance score of 3.02. This finding indicates that consumers are concerned with aspects such as processing hygiene, the freshness of raw materials, and the absence of harmful substances or excessive preservatives in the food they consume. As consumer awareness of food quality and safety continues to increase, this result presents both an opportunity and a challenge for pindang restaurant operators to strengthen hygiene practices and implement higher food safety standards throughout the preparation and serving processes. The naturalness attribute ranked fourth, with a score of 2.02. Although pindang is traditionally prepared using natural ingredients, including freshwater fish and fresh spices, this attribute was perceived as less important than health, taste, and food safety considerations. This finding suggests that consumers may regard the natural characteristics of pindang as an inherent feature of the product rather than a distinguishing attribute influencing their purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, the local identity attribute received the lowest importance score (1.04). This result does not necessarily indicate that consumers undervalue the cultural and regional identity of pindang. Rather, it suggests that consumers prioritize functional and hedonic attributes, such as health benefits, sensory quality, and food safety, over the product's geographical origin or cultural significance when making consumption decisions (Soare et al., 2023).

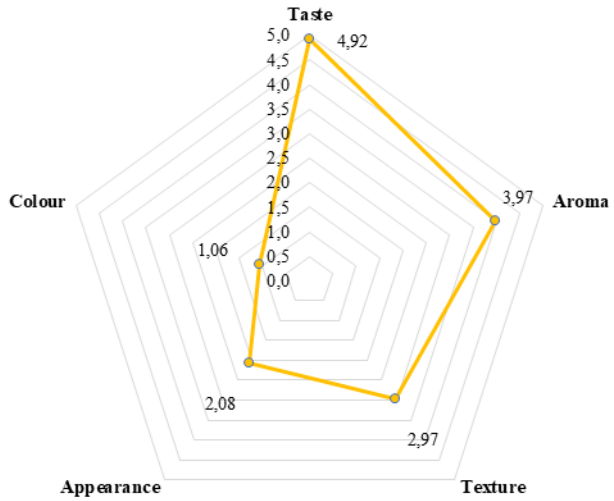


Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

Figure 5. Consumer Perceptions of the Attributes of Pindang Products

Consumer evaluations of the sensory attributes of pindang were conducted using a weighted analysis based on the importance rankings provided by respondents, as shown in Figure 6. This ranking-based weighting method produced scores reflecting the relative importance of each sensory attribute, with higher scores indicating attributes considered more important in determining consumer preferences. Taste was the most dominant sensory attribute in shaping consumer preferences for pindang, with the highest score of 4.92 on a five-point scale. This result is consistent with previous studies confirming that taste is the primary determinant of consumer acceptance and preference for food products (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Pindang is known for its complex and distinctive flavor profile, a combination of the sourness of kandis acid fruit, the spiciness of chili peppers, and the savory richness of fish broth, which serves as its primary distinguishing feature from similar dishes in other regions.

Aroma ranked second with a score of 3.97, confirming its role as a highly influential sensory attribute after taste. In food product evaluation, aroma often serves as an initial stimulus that evokes taste expectations even before the food is actually consumed (Sirangelo, 2019). Pindang broth, prepared with distinctive spices such as turmeric, lemongrass, bay leaves, galangal, and kandis acid fruit, produces a characteristic and appetizing aroma profile, creating a strong emotional appeal for consumers. Texture ranked third with a score of 2.97, indicating that consumers also pay attention to the firmness and tenderness of the fish meat in pindang. The appropriate texture, fish meat that is tender but not mushy, along with slightly chewy skin, serves as an indicator of a well-executed cooking process. Appearance ranked fourth with a score of 2.08, suggesting that although visual presentation plays a role in initial assessment, pindang consumers prioritize taste and aroma quality. Colour was the sensory attribute with the lowest score (1.06), indicating that consumers do not place significant importance on the colour of pindang broth as long as key attributes such as taste, aroma, and texture are satisfied.



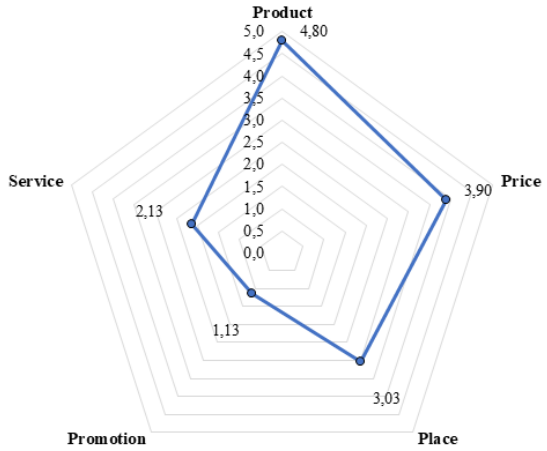
Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

Figure 6. Consumer Evaluation of Sensory Attributes of Pindang

Consumer perceptions of the marketing mix were evaluated using an importance-weighting approach. The five attributes assessed in this study, namely product, price, place, service, and promotion, are presented in Figure 7. Among these attributes, the product factor received the highest importance score (4.80), indicating that product quality is the primary determinant of consumer evaluations and satisfaction with pindang restaurants. Product quality encompasses several key attributes, including taste consistency, ingredient freshness, and the authenticity of the recipes used in preparation. Price was ranked as the second most important attribute, with a score of 3.90. This finding suggests that consumers of pindang in Palembang continue to consider price an important factor in their purchasing decisions, although its influence is secondary to product quality. The result reflects consumers' expectations that the price paid should correspond to the value received, including both the quality of the food and the overall dining experience (Alwinie et al., 2024). Such findings indicate that consumers are willing to pay appropriate prices provided that the products offered meet their expectations in terms of quality and authenticity.

The place attribute, which encompasses physical accessibility and the strategic placement of restaurants, ranked third with an importance score of 3.03. This finding indicates that ease of access and convenient locations are important considerations for consumers when selecting pindang restaurants. Many well-known pindang establishments in Palembang are situated in strategically accessible areas, with good connectivity to both private and public transportation networks. Such accessibility may enhance customer convenience and increase the likelihood of repeat visits. The service dimension (people/service) ranked fourth, with an importance score of 2.13. Although service quality remains a relevant factor in shaping the overall dining experience, the results suggest that consumers place greater emphasis on the core attributes of the product itself. Nevertheless, professional, responsive, and friendly staff contribute positively to customer satisfaction by creating a comfortable and enjoyable dining environment. Therefore, while service may not be the primary determinant of restaurant choice, it remains an important supporting factor in enhancing the overall consumer experience.

Promotion received the lowest importance score (1.13) among the marketing mix attributes, a finding that is particularly noteworthy in the context of traditional cuisine. This low score suggests that consumers' purchasing decisions regarding pindang are only minimally influenced by formal promotional activities, such as advertising campaigns, discounts, or other marketing incentives. Instead, consumer preferences appear to be driven primarily by factors related to product quality, authenticity, and prior consumption experiences. This finding is consistent with previous studies on ethnic and traditional restaurants, which have demonstrated that long-established reputations and word-of-mouth recommendations exert a greater influence on consumer choice than formal promotional efforts (Jalilvand et al., 2017; Chua et al., 2020). In traditional culinary markets, trust is often built through personal experiences and social networks, making reputation a more effective determinant of consumer behavior than conventional marketing strategies. Consequently, maintaining product quality and customer satisfaction may be more important for sustaining consumer loyalty than increasing promotional expenditures.



Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

Figure 6. Consumer Evaluation of Marketing Strategy Components for Pindang Products

Managerial Implications

This study has several practical implications for stakeholders within Palembang's pindang culinary ecosystem. For pindang restaurant operators, maintaining consistent product quality should be the primary focus, as product-related attributes received the highest importance score (4.80) among the marketing mix dimensions. Consistency in flavor, ingredient freshness, and recipe authenticity are critical factors influencing customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions (Manal et al., 2024). In addition, improving hygiene and food safety standards should be prioritized, as food safety attributes ranked third in importance based on consumer perceptions (3.02). Obtaining kitchen hygiene certifications and increasing transparency

in food preparation processes may serve as effective strategies for enhancing consumer trust and differentiating restaurants from competitors. Furthermore, menu diversification, including shrimp- and chicken-based pindang as well as innovative variants utilizing less commonly used ingredients, may help attract a broader range of consumer segments and expand market reach.

Local governments and culinary tourism stakeholders, these findings highlight the significant potential of positioning pindang as a flagship gastronomic tourism icon of Palembang. The predominance of young respondents (aged 16–30 years) in the study sample may be viewed positively, as it suggests intergenerational continuity in consumption patterns. This finding indicates that younger generations continue to appreciate this traditional dish, demonstrating that pindang possesses strong prospects for long-term sustainability if it is effectively preserved, managed, and promoted (Guerrero et al., 2010). For fisheries-based food businesses, the strong consumer preference for patin and gabus fish presents opportunities to develop a more integrated and sustainable supply chain. In particular, the high demand for river patin highlights the potential for expanding high-quality patin aquaculture systems capable of meeting the quality requirements of the pindang industry. Strengthening production capacity and quality assurance throughout the supply chain may contribute to ensuring a stable supply of raw materials while supporting the continued growth of the industry.

Conclusion

RM. PMR achieved the highest consumer preference score among pindang restaurants in Palembang. This preference is likely associated with its high popularity and strong appeal among consumers. Based on data from 215 respondents, fish was the most preferred main ingredient for pindang at 60.4%, followed by beef bones (24.2%), shrimp (8.7%), chicken (6.2%), and poultry (0.6%). More specifically, river catfish (Pangasius pangasius) was the primary ingredient most preferred by respondents (48.9%), and the fish body was the most preferred part (55.06%), because it has thick flesh, a uniform texture, is easy to eat, and offers a richer flavor. Consumer perceptions of pindang also show that the health-related attribute received the highest score (4.92). This indicates that consumers perceive pindang as a healthy food choice and consider its health benefits an important factor in their evaluation of the product. From a sensory perspective, taste was the most dominant attribute in shaping consumer preferences, with a score of 4.92. Additionally, the product factor received the highest importance score with a score of 4.80, indicating that product quality was the primary determinant of consumer evaluations and satisfaction.

Overall, this study indicates that the quality of raw materials, taste consistency, and product quality are the key factors influencing consumer preferences for pindang restaurants in Palembang. These findings provide valuable insights for pindang restaurant operators in maintaining product quality, ensuring consistent flavor, and enhancing the image of pindang as a traditional culinary product that offers not only cultural significance but also nutritional benefits to consumers.

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