**Consumer Perception of Salted Fish Product in Bengkulu City**

**Yety Meyzella, Basuki Sigit Priyono, and Ketut Sukiyono**

Department of Agricultural Socio-Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Bengkulu

* Corresponding author: yetymeyzella@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT:** The fulfillment of carbohydrate needs encourages people to gravitate toward higher-value menu items, such as animal protein. The ever-increasing human demand for animal protein is related to the human need for nutrition. To know and understand what consumers need and want, business actors must keep an eye on market developments, which can change at any time in response to shifting consumer needs. Therefore, business actors need to study carefully about consumers. This research aims to examine consumer perceptions of salted fish products in Bengkulu City. The research location was determined purposively, and 30 consumers were selected using accidental sampling. Consumer perception of salted fish is analyzed based on product attributes, namely taste, price, aroma, packaging, and services, measured using a Likert Scale. The results showed that salted fish products consumers in Bengkulu City have a good perception of overall product attributes.

**Keywords:** perception, consumer, salted fish.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:


**INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a developing country that focuses on national economic development. Economic development is through economic growth efforts related to increased production of goods and services. The implementation of national development impacts regional development because regions are part of a country. Indonesia is a unitary state, which includes national development and regional development. Regional economic development is how local governments and communities manage the resources that exist in the area concerned. Natural resource management forms fish is a type of food that contains high protein, and high content of essential amino acids needed by the body, it is biological value reaches 90%. So that the fish can be put to good use, then it is essential to know the characteristics that are found in fish, for example, the structure of the body of the fish, a comparison of body size and weight, physical and chemical properties, protein, fat, vitamins, and other compounds they contain (Adawayah, 2008).

The fish has a price that is affordable compared to protein sources other animals. It allows low-income people to be able to meet the needs of protein. But when this dried fish has also been accepted by the middle class and above. The beginning of the drying process only utilizes the sun's rays. In principle, the process of drying will reduce the water content in the fish so that the activities of bacteria in the fish will be inhibited or can be stopped (Ulfah, 2013).
Bengkulu city has a total area of 14.452 km² and the length of the beach of 17.6 km² with the broad waters of the sea 12.6720 M and the number of residents 266.094 people. The potential of fish in the City of Bengkulu by 145.334 tons. It means that statistically, the effect on the amount of fish consumed. If the average fish consumption per capita by 29,04 Kg/Capita/Year (the number is still below Expectation Food (PPH) by 30,40 Kg/Capita/year), then the need for fish consumption for one year is equal to 7.727.369,76. Kg or 7.727,369 tons and the number of fish needed in the city of Bengkulu can be met with its potential for yourself and even to excess. This excess would have to be used for the greatest prosperity of the people, especially for fishermen or coastal communities of the city of Bengkulu. Excess fresh fish is if it is not used for other purp, oses, it will not provide benefits or added value. Therefore, fresh fish with excess can be processed into salted fish (COMMISSION of the City of Bengkulu, 2010).

Salted fish is a fish that has been preserved by way of salting. Pickling is composed of two processes, namely salting and drying. The main purpose of salting with the purpose of the preservation process, or other processing, namely to extend the durability and shelf life of fish (Simanjuntak, 2012).

The type of salted fish in the market is very diverse in size, shape, and processing techniques. Size salted fish vary from small to large; the shape is also diverse from the whole, half, or cut in small sizes. Salted fish is generally processed traditionally. The processing of salted fish with the traditional drying method with the sun’s rays is highly dependent on weather conditions. Drying salted fish to be delayed, and the fish will rot if it rains (Suprihatin, 2009).

Types of small fish, like the song, anchovies, and squid, are a product of the processing has chosen using due to the high availability of raw materials. The processing characteristics exist significantly with the attitude of processing in determining the commodity salted fish (Heruwati, 2002).

Village Malabero and Kecamatan Kampung Melayu is an area in the City of Bengkulu, which most of its inhabitants work as a maker (craftsmen) and the seller salted fish. Kecamatan Kampung Melayu is located near the port of the Island of Bai that many offer free. Every day, many offer the manufacture of salted fish. Traditional fishermen mostly make salted fish in Kampung Melayu with small-scale or household businesses. The salted fish is made of anchovy, fish kase, fish beledang, and dencis. So is the case with the Village Malabero located near Fort Marlborough and Pantai Malabero where the Village Malabero is identical with the sale of salted fish that can be used by-the-by comparison Kecamatan Kampung Melayu by the people of the City of Bengkulu and-comers because this village has access from many directions supported by the road conditions and is the tourism of the City of Bengkulu.

The processing of salted fish includes a promising business because the price is affordable, and a lot of people consume it to be sold to all layers of society (Sari, 2011). With so many product manufacturers salted fish is certainly the manufacturers or businesses want to be the best. One of the keys to the success of businesses is to clearly understand the needs and desires of the customer. By knowing it, businesses can define, run, and control the marketing strategy with the right (Nitisusastro, 2011).

Consumption patterns of someone different, but in general in people will
prioritize the basic needs, and then meet the needs of the other. Fulfilling the need for carbohydrates encourages the community to be more oriented to the menu higher the value, i.e., animal protein. The human need for animal protein is always increasing concerning human needs on nutrition (Aminah, 2005).

To know and understand what is needed and wanted by consumers, businesses must constantly monitor the development of the market environment that continues to change in line with the changing demands and desires of consumers. Therefore, businesses need to study carefully about the consumer (Nitisusastro, 2011). Furthermore, research is a Field Study that aims to determine consumer perceptions of salted fish products in the City of Bengkulu needs to be done.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This consumer perception research was carried out in the Malabero village, Bengkulu City. The research location was determined purposively, based on the consideration that in the Malabero village, Bengkulu City, there were many sellers of salted fish products. This field study research was conducted in April 2021.

Determination of the number of samples is determined by accidental sampling. According to Sugiyono (2004), the accidental sampling method is a method of determining the sample by chance, anyone who coincidentally meets a researcher can be a respondent if it is seen that the person met meets the criteria as a respondent. With this method due to the limitations of time, cost, and research opportunities, a sample of 30 respondents who are buying salted fish products in the Malabero Village, Bengkulu City, has been taken at least 2 times.

The types of data used in this field study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from respondents through interviews using a list of questions (questionnaires) that have been prepared in advance, while secondary data is data that supports primary data. references related to research.

The data analysis method used in this research is descriptive qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis is one of the research procedures that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing from the perceptions of the people observed. The qualitative analysis used in this study is an analysis to calculate consumer perceptions of salted fish products in Bengkulu City.

The Likert scale measures respondents’ perceptions or a group of people about social phenomena. This social phenomenon has been defined explicitly by the researcher, hereinafter referred to as the research variable. With a Likert scale, the variables to be measured are translated into variable indicators. In this study, the attributes of salted fish that will be measured are taste, price, aroma, packaging, service (Sugiono, 2009). The method of measuring the Likert scale according to Machfoedz (2008) is:

Positive statements: (1) Strongly agree (SS): 4, (2) Agree (S) : 3, (3) Disagree (TS) : 2, (4) Strongly disagree (STS) : 1

Negative statements: (1) Strongly agree (SS): 1, (2) Agree (S) : 2, (3) Disagree (TS) : 3, (4) Strongly disagree (S) : 4

The statement or response was analyzed to find out whether the respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed on each statement or question with the choice of the scale above (Likert, 1932). The calculation of the interval scale with the formula:
Interval $= \frac{a \times b}{c}$

Where $a$ is the number of questions per attribute, $b$ is the highest score of the statement, and $c$ is the number of rating scales to be formed. The criteria for measuring perception are: (Azwar, 2010)

1. Good perception if the T score obtained by the respondent from the questionnaire $> T$ means.
2. The perception is not good if the T score obtained by the respondent from the questionnaire $< T$ mean.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Characteristics of Respondents**

In this field study, the requirements to become respondents are consumers who are buying salted fish products in the Malabero village, Bengkulu City, and have bought salted fish at least 2 times. Characteristics of respondents in this field study include age, formal education, and the number of dependents in the family. The characteristics of consumer respondents are presented in Table 1 which can be seen in the table below as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age (Years Old)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23-39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-56</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Education (Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduate SLTA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College/academic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Amount of family responsibilities (Person)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2021.

Based on the results of the study, consumers of salted fish products were 25 women (83.3%) and 5 men (16.7%). This happens because in general women pay more attention to the needs of their family members and are responsible for regulating household consumption. So it can be said that the role of women in deciding to purchase vegetables and side dishes is very large. This is indicated by the role of women who are generally more involved in making purchasing decisions than men.

Age is one of the factors that is closely related to the ability to work in carrying out farming activities or activities outside of farming. Age can be used as a benchmark in seeing a person's activities at work if, with a productive age condition, it...
is likely that someone can work well and maximally so that it can have an impact on high incomes so that they can buy the necessities needed in their household (Hasyim, 2010). Based on the data in table 1 above, it can be seen that the average age of consumers of salted fish products is 40 years and the percentage is 40-56 years old (50%), and the number of consumers aged 23 to 39 years with a percentage of 50% which shows that the age of consumers of salted fish products who buy salted fish in Malabero Village are of productive age. This shows that respondents who consume salted fish are still active in considering the attributes of the salted fish they will consume. Age itself has its influence on consumers in buying salted fish (Irianto et al., 2020). In addition, this age group is an adult age group who tends to think rationally, where consumers in buying salted fish already have certain considerations in making decisions and understand what salted fish to choose, which is according to consumer tastes. Salted fish is a popular food because it is easy to find in the market and the price is cheap. Besides being cheap and delicious, salted fish is also practical because it is durable. Increasing age will also change consumer consumption patterns at each age and age indicators can determine tastes, needs, or desires for a product (Arifin et al., 2018).

Based on the data in table 1 shows that consumers of salted fish products the average length of education taken is up to high school graduation. This shows that consumers of salted fish products tend to finish their education up to high school, whereas consumers of salted fish products who take high school education are 17 people with a percentage of 56.7% and 13 people with a percentage of 43.3% of consumers taking college education. The level of education determines a person's acceptance of knowledge and information. Consumers who have a good education will be responsive to information that can influence the selection of a product or brand (Sumarwan, 2002). The level of education is related to consumer insight in determining the choice of products to be purchased (Miftah et al., 2020).

Consumers who have better higher education will be very responsive to information and selective in choosing products, besides that education also plays a role in having knowledge about nutrition in a product. The higher the level of education will certainly affect a person's desire to buy salted fish, usually these consumers will be more selective in buying salted fish. And the greater the number of family dependents in one household, the greater the need for salted fish consumption and will affect consumers in purchasing this salted fish.

Family is the closest environment for consumers. Family members will influence consumers in making market snack purchasing decisions (Sutarniet, 2018). The number of dependents of family members describes the size of the dependents of the family's living expenses. According to Lestari (2006), the number of dependents of family members in a household life can affect the level of consumption that must be issued by the household concerned because it is associated with more and more needs. Based on Table 1, family dependents on average have 2-3 dependents, where the percentage is 63.3% (0-2 people) and the percentage is 36.7% (3-5 people). According to Hasyim (2003) that the number of family dependents is one of the factors that need to be considered in determining income in meeting their needs. A large number of dependents in the family will encourage them to do many activities, especially in finding and
increasing their family income. The more family members, the greater the burden of life that will be borne or must be met. The number of family members will affect the decision to purchase fresh vegetables in the family, which is related to the amount to be purchased. The more the number of consumer family members, the greater the need to consume vegetables in the family.

**Consumer Perception of Salted Fish Products**

Consumer perception, according to Kotler (200), is the process by which a consumer selects, organizes, and translates information input to create a meaningful picture of an observed object. Amirullah (2002) suggests that perception is a process in which individuals select, manage, and interpret stimuli in the form of meaning and images. Ferrinadewi (2008) perception is a process by which various stimuli are selected, organized, and interpreted into meaningful information. In marketing, perception is more important than reality because perception influences consumer behavior. People's perceptions of the same object can differ due to three understanding processes: selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention (Kotler and Keller, 2000). Furthermore, perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. A person is ready to act if he or she already has motivation. This action taken will be influenced by the perception of the situation he faces. Two people with the same motivation and goals may act differently because they are in different situations (Stephen Robbin, 2003). Perception is a process carried out in assessing and interpreting the chosen one. Consumer perceptions of salted fish products in this field study are divided into 2 categories, namely good and bad. Perception is a process carried out in assessing and interpreting the chosen one. Almost all consumers have a good perception of the attributes of taste, price, aroma, packaging, and service.

This can be seen in Table 2, most of the respondents have a good total perception of salted fish in Bengkulu City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Interval Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount (Person)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>Salty</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>Less Salty</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>Cheap</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aroma</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>Non-Rancid</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>Rancid</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Packaging</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>Not practical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processed Data (2021)

Taste is a sensation that is obtained by the sense of taste when enjoying food. Based on Table 2, it is known that the majority of respondents have a good perception of taste, which means they agree that taste can affect consumer tastes, which is 100% of 30 respondents. So, it can be concluded that consumer perceptions...
of salted fish taste attribute products in the Malabero Village area are dominant on taste attributes, namely in the good category. This illustrates that respondents/consumers agree that the taste of salted fish in Bengkulu City does not taste like rotten fish, even the taste produced is following their tastes and this makes respondents want to buy more to be served as a side dish. The taste attribute is one of the attributes that is considered. Furthermore, for consumers in deciding to purchase, the taste of a product can be an indicator for someone to like the product or not (Widiyanto et al., 2016). Taste is the first indicator that can reveal the quality of the salted fish taste. For most people, the taste is the most important attribute and influences them in consuming products, compared to other attributes (Muzdalifah, 2012). It can be interpreted that the consideration of the taste of a product can be an indicator for someone to like or dislike a product. In a study by Abdul Hakim (2016), it was stated that most consumers admitted that the main reason for consuming salted fish was because of its distinctive taste. This depends on the respondent's taste and choice of salted fish. Consumers feel salted fish is very easy to cook and can be combined with cooking menus for families. The taste in fish produces salty which comes from the salting process where the salt is smeared on fish that have been cleaned and then dried in the sun.

Price is the value of an item or service as measured by a certain amount of money to be willing to release the goods or services owned to another party. For buyers, prices have an economic and psychological impact. Purchasing power is related to the economic impact of the buyer because the price is a cost for the buyer. The higher the price the fewer products will be purchased, conversely the lower the price the more products can be purchased. Based on Table 2, respondents have a good perception of the price of salted fish products, namely 30 respondents with a percentage of 100%.

Respondents who have a good perception with a percentage of 100% agree that the price offered is still affordable for consumers and does not have much impact on their income, which means that the price for salted fish products is not burdensome for consumers and the price variants for salted fish are varied so that consumers can choose the right price. Desired according to the income or income of consumers. In addition, price is one of the main factors that influence consumer attitudes in making requests for an item. Furthermore, price as an attribute is a concept of diversity that has different meanings for each community and depends on the budget and characteristics of consumers (Irwandi and Imtihan, 2020).

According to Peter and Olson (2014), price perception is the delivery of price information that is understood by consumers and made meaningful to them. Price perception shows that price information can be received through the senses of sight and hearing. In research by Widyastuti (2018) regarding the effect of price on purchasing decisions for organic vegetables, it is said that the more benefits that a product has at a market-appropriate price are considered by consumers to buy the product. Pratama (2014) explains that in buying a product, consumers do not only consider the quality but also consider the feasibility of the price. Consumers' buying interest in a product is strongly influenced by their assessment of the worthiness of the price of the product itself, where consumers will consider whether the price they pay is by the benefits they will receive. Widyastuti
Aroma is an attribute that forms an intrinsic product attribute because the aroma can be identified when the product will be consumed (Racmayati, 2017). Based on Table 2, respondents have a good perception of the price of salted fish, namely 30 respondents with a percentage of 100%.

Consumers who have a good perception agree that the aroma of salted fish does not have a rancid aroma but the aroma of salted fish is normal and the aroma of salted fish is not disturbing. Some consumers also know that the aroma in salted fish products is caused by the salting process in salted fish products. Salted fish is a protein source food product that is processed from fish or fish meat that is preserved by adding a certain amount of salt, to produce fish with a distinctive taste, aroma, and texture (Adawiyah, 2011).

Product/packaging design is one of the consumer's considerations in the buying process. These considerations include the following, namely the shape, model, and color of product packaging. An attractive design will make consumers more interested in the product. Attractive product packaging designs make consumers feel satisfied with the product (Ambarwati, 2016). Based on Table 2, respondents have a good perception of salted fish packaging, namely 10 respondents with a percentage of 100%.

Consumers who have a good perception consider that the packaging of salted fish products is very practical, making it easier for consumers to use and sufficient to protect salted fish products. According to consumers who have a good perception of packaging, they think that the plastic packaging for salted fish products is sufficient, when placed in the kitchen or food storage it does not take up much space. However, some consumers who have a bad perception also think that the packaging of salted fish products is not very attractive to them, just ordinary, which is only enough to protect. According to some consumers who have a bad perception, they want packaging that protects in the long term, such as if in large or medium-scale purchases, the packaging used is using jars or food boxes made of plastic. If you use plastic, consumers think it doesn't last long, like being eaten by termites or easily torn and brittle.

The purpose of packaging in addition to protecting is selling the product inside, selling products with the right packaging and design to get the attention of potential consumers so that the buying process occurs. Packaging is an effective advertising medium, according to Terence A Shimp (2000) is informing, persuading, reminding, adding value, and assisting. Packaging with good attributes serves to change consumer attitudes, according to Katz (2002).

Service is an effort to meet consumer needs coupled with the accuracy of the delivery method to meet consumer expectations and satisfaction with the products offered. When the services provided can meet or exceed consumer expectations or expectations, the consumer is satisfied (Andreaseen and Lindestad, and Parasuraman, 2005). Based on Table 2, respondents quite have a good perception of service when buying salted fish in Malabero Village with a percentage of 100%.

Consumers who have a good perception of salted fish products agree that salted fish traders are friendly to consumers and serve quickly. Salted fish
traders according to some consumers also do not hesitate to answer questions from consumers, because of the many types of salted fish and the various sizes of the salted fish products. Some consumers who have a good perception of service also feel that the traders are friendly, especially if the merchant asks whether they are Bengkulu residents or not, if not then the merchant does not hesitate to explain about the salted fish they sell, be it taste, price or size to make consumers convenient shopping. In principle, service delivery is carried out to meet what consumers want. Good customer service is very important for a company. This is because satisfying the customer means getting a profit/profit (Arifin et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of field studies and discussions, it can be concluded that most consumers of salted fish products have a good perception of salted fish products in Malaebro Village with a scoring system using suspension on product attributes (taste, price, aroma, packaging, and service).

SUGGESTION

Based on the results of field studies and the reality of conditions in the field, suggestions that can be given to salted fish product traders are to give prices according to the quantity and not discriminate against salted fish product consumers.

REFERENCE


