



## Innovation of Pindang Muara Enim: Analysis of Consumer Acceptance and Marketing Strategies for Culinary Tourism Development

Kartika Theresia Simangunsong<sup>1</sup>, Rizka Yuniarti<sup>1</sup>, Pelliyezer Karo Karo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: Kartika Theresia Simangunsong

Email: [kartikats@poltekpar-palembang.ac.id](mailto:kartikats@poltekpar-palembang.ac.id)



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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop and test the initial consumer acceptance of the innovation of Muara Enim pindang using kemang fruit instead of the traditional souring agents like tamarind and pineapple. This research used a Research and Development model with a focus on product testing. The study used a questionnaire with 93 consumers in South Sumatra who were familiar with pindang. Product acceptance was evaluated using organoleptic characteristics including colour, aroma, texture and taste in three parts of the product: fish part, soup and seasonings. Descriptive and Net Promoter Score (NPS) analysis were applied to determine the acceptance, promotion, and attributes that needed improvement. This study shows the innovation was welcomed, with a total NPS score of +30. The highest scored attributes are broth taste (NPS score of +59), fish component taste (+55) and broth texture (+55), which means that the primary sensory aspects of the innovation were accepted by consumers. But, the taste of condiment, taste of fish component, and texture of condiment are lower, indicating that there is potential to improve the visual appearance and supporting components. The socio demographic profile of the respondents also shows that millennials and Generation Z are the potential consumers, with family oriented visits and growing digital payment. The results suggest that the innovation of Muara Enim pindang has a potential as local gastronomic product, but needs improvement to enhance sensory integrity and consumer acceptance. The research suggests enhancing visual attributes, focusing on taste consistency, and marketing approaches that combine local identity, family and digital trends..

## Introduction

Culinary tourism has increasingly been a significant regional tourism growth in Indonesia, and in regions where traditional food is very strong like in South Sumatra (Tunjungsari et al., 2025; Untari & Satria 2025; Alvianna et al., 2025). Food is no longer viewed as a mere consumption necessity, but as a cultural experience, a source of regional identification, and as an instrument of enhancing the economic power of the locality. Culinary tourism is the type of travel done with the purpose to gain the benefits, knowledge, and taste experiences of the specific cuisine of a specific region (Mau et al., 2024; Moliterni et al., 2025; Farzin & Makvandi, 2025). Local food can be used in this context to contribute to the attractiveness of destinations due to its ability to provide consumers and visitors with the opportunity to experience regional culture as a result of the tastes, ingredients, methods of preparation and the social significance of food. Thus, culinary tourism development must not only preserve traditional dishes, but also be carefully innovative and not offend the taste of consumers (Ahanu & Christofani, 2025; Fatima & Issa, 2025).

The South Sumatra culinary identity is rich and pindang is one of the most well-known traditional food. Pindang is a spicy fish soup cooked in spices, herbs and souring substances which give a sour and savory flavor. Pindang has different regional variations in South Sumatra, such as Pindang Pegagan, Pindang Meranjat, Pindang Sekayu, and Pindang Musi Rawas, which have their own seasoning, taste, and locality (Setiawan et al., 2024). This heterogeneity demonstrates that pindang is not a fixed and static culinary item, but a living regional cuisine as determined by the local food and ingredients, local taste, and local culinary practice. Being a local gastronomic product, pindang can be used to facilitate tourism development since culinary products can enhance visitor experience, add value to consumption, and contribute to the cultural appeal of a destination (Karo Karo, 2020; Pratiyudha et al., 2023).

In this food environment, Muara Enim can leverage on its own pindang by using local ingredients that are not maximized (Setiawan et al., 2025; Edwar et al., 2026). Kemang fruit or *Mangifera kemanga* is one of these ingredients. Kemang is naturally sour-flavored and its aroma is unique, which makes it possibly an alternative to traditional souring products, like tamarind and pineapple, in the pindang production. The kemang ingredient is significant as it does not merely add a new ingredient, but also establishes a more particular local identity to Muara Enim pindang. The idea of gastronomy is closely associated with cultural representation and local wisdom, and therefore traditional food innovation must, ideally, retain the cultural meaning and generate commercial value (Setiawan and Karo, 2023). Muara Enim pindang can be marketed through kemang based innovation, which will position it as a traditional culinary product, but with a sensory difference as compared to other pindang varieties.

Nevertheless, the innovation in conventional food should be considered cautiously since the acceptance of the consumers cannot be presupposed based only on the novelty of the ingredients. Conventional food brings with it the memory, familiarity and sensory expectations. A product can be innovative and yet it might not be received when the consumers feel there is a change in taste, aroma, texture, or even appearance but this change is not in line with expectations. Past research on pindang products suggests that consumer perception and product quality are the core of competitiveness of regional pindang variants (Rahmania et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2024). Thus, any pindang innovation must be tested using consumer based testing to ensure that product development is not solely guided by novelty, but also the indication of sensual acceptance and referral possibility.

Consumer acceptance is explored using organoleptic and Net Promoter Score in this study. Organoleptic evaluation is pertinent since the innovativeness of food is perceived by using sensory qualities (color, aroma, texture, taste) of food. These features establish the level of attractiveness, recognition, and pleasure in the product. Net Promoter Score is also pertinent, as it indicates the chances that consumers would recommend a product to others. NPS places the respondents into detractors, passives, and promoters and compares the score by the percentage of detractors against the percentage of promoters (Gitlin, 2024). NPS, as a customer loyalty and recommendation indicator, can be used to gauge the potential of consumer satisfaction leading to positive word of mouth (Schlosser, 2024; De Cleen et al., 2025).

Understanding market potential of a culinary innovation also depends on the consumer profile. In the modern context of culinary marketing, a comprehensive strategy will be crucial, integrating local branding, segmentation of consumers, digital storytelling, and memorable consumer experience (Karo et al., 2024; Taslim et al., 2023). It is especially applicable to the case of traditional food products since modern consumers are paying more and more attention to authenticity, sustainability, personal experience, and the history of the product (Le et al., 2019). This is why innovating Muara Enim pindang innovative must not only gauge the

sensorially acceptance of the product, but also find the specific features of consumers who are responsive to the product such as their demographics, visitation habit, purchasing propensity, and payment preference.

It is against this background that this research seeks to formulate and investigate the preliminary consumer acceptance of Muara Enim pindang innovation based on the use of kemang fruit as a tamarind and pineapple substitute. In particular, the research aims to summarize the product innovation, examine the nature of pindang consumers in South Sumatra, quantify the product acceptance using organoleptic and NPS, and discuss the the marketing implications in view of consumer profile and performance of product attributes. This research is likely to help build the gastronomic identity of Muara Enim and even facilitate the overall growth of local culinary tourism by bridging local ingredient based innovation, consumer acceptance, and culinary marketing direction.

## Methods

The study adopted a Research and Development strategy to innovate and test consumer acceptance of Muara Enim pindang innovation using kemang fruit to replace traditional souring ingredients that are usually used to prepare pindang. This design was selected based on the character of the study, which was not just based on observing consumer perceptions, but also the creation of a product innovation and how acceptable it was to consumers. Research and Development was appropriate in this case since the intention of the study was to relate the culinary product development with consumer based assessment in which the innovation can be evaluated as not just a recipe change but also a possible gastronomic product that can be used in culinary tourism development.

The development process was modeled after the proposed Research and Development model by Sugiyono, which typically comprises of ten steps, which include identifying potential and problems, gathering supporting information, designing the product, validating the design, revising the design, conducting product testing, revising the product, conducting usage testing, revising the final product, and disseminating the product. In this study however, it was intentionally restricted to the sixth stage which was product testing. This was done due to the fact that the primary aim of the study was to investigate the first degree of consumer acceptance of pindang innovation as opposed to full scale commercialization or product distribution. Thus, these findings of this research are explained as a premature consumer acceptance test that may be used as a background to the subsequent product improvement and development of marketing strategies.

The study was initiated by the recognition of the Muara Enim culinary potential, in particular, the opportunity to use kemang fruit as a unique local ingredient in pindang. Kemang was chosen due to its naturally sour flavor that can be used as an alternative to tamarind and pineapple which are usually utilized to produce the sour flavor in pindang. Kemang usage was not meant to overtake the culinary character of pindang, but rather enhance it in terms of adding a local ingredient that can reinforce the distinctiveness of Muara Enim gastronomy. This formulation made the product designed to maintain the primitive nature of South Sumatran pindang with a particular sensory identity based on kemang.

Once the concept of the product was identified, the pindang innovation was ready by preserving the traditional ingredients that were in the pindang dish, which were fish, broth, spices, herbs, and condiments. The innovation was found mostly in the souring aspect, whereby kemang fruit was utilized to achieve a unique taste profile. The product was then subjected to consumer

testing to get their reaction to its sensory characteristics. The process enabled the study to transition to consumer testing of the product in a logical way, given that the acceptability of culinary innovation is not only determined by the novelty of the ingredient, but also on whether the end product will be deemed enjoyable, recognizable, and recommendable.

The study sample comprised of consumers with experience of consuming pindang in South Sumatra. This population was deemed to be relevant since the respondents had to be familiar with pindang before giving meaningful evaluations on the product innovation. Accidental sampling was used to select the sample of 93 respondents. The sampling method was applied due to the study being limited to consumers that were available during the product testing process and those who passed the minimal requirement of prior consumption of pindang. Though accidental sampling does not intend to bring about generalized statistics, it is appropriate in a primary study of product acceptance as it will be able to capture instant consumer reactions of those who are pertinent to the culinary product under test.

The Lemeshow formula was used to determine the number of respondents with a confidence level of 90 percent and a level of precision of 10 percent. This formula was useful in establishing the minimum size of sample in a study whereby the entire population of pindang consumers could not be specified. In the context of the research, the sample size was deemed sufficient to outline the initial trends on consumer acceptance, especially since the research was developmental and exploratory. Thus, the results must be taken as a first sign of the acceptance by the market, but not as the all-inclusive representation of all pindang consumers in South Sumatra.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data by giving it to the respondents at the end of the evaluation of the pindang innovation. The questionnaire was made in such a way that it would capture information about respondent characteristics and consumer evaluation of the product. The characteristics of respondents were age group, occupation, domicile, visit pattern, frequency of consumption, level of expenditure and mode of preferred payment. The inclusion of these variables was due to the fact that they give a better understanding of the consumer profile and give a reason as to the possible market direction of the product. Meanwhile, product evaluation was based on organoleptic properties, i.e. color, aroma, texture, and taste of three product components comprising of the fish component, broth, and condiments.

The organoleptic evaluation was assessed on a numerical scale of 10. The use of this scale was due to the fact that the responses of consumers could be interpreted using the Net Promoter Score scheme. Within this framework, the respondents who provided a score between 0 and 6 would be considered detractors, respondents who provided a score between 7 and 8 would be considered passives and respondents who provided a score between 9 and 10 would be considered promoters. This classification allowed the study not only to measure whether consumers liked the product or not, but also to determine whether they were willing to recommend the product to other people. This is a significant measure in culinary tourism studies since consumer recommendation is the key determinant of product visibility, destination image, and the intention to purchase in the future.

The Net Promoter Score was determined by getting the difference between the percentage of detractors and the percentage of promoters. The score obtained was then used to identify the degree of consumer acceptance of the pindang innovation. A positive NPS shows that the percentage of consumers who have strong tendency to give a recommendation is larger than the percentage of consumers who give negative responses. NPS was used both cumulatively and partially in this study. The cumulative score was applied to take the total level of acceptance of the product whereas the partial score was applied to determine the intensity and

the weakness of each sensory attribute. By doing this, the research would be able to differentiate the aspects of the product that consumers already accepted and the aspects that still needed to be improved.

The analysis of data was conducted in a number of steps. The profile of respondents in terms of demographic and behavioral characteristics was presented using descriptive analysis. They needed this analysis since consumer acceptance of culinary products is usually influenced by age, occupation, consumption pattern, spending capacity and payment preference. Second, the data of organoleptic were processed to determine how the consumers react to the color, aroma, texture, and taste of the fish component and the broth and condiments. Third, Net Promoter Score of each indicator was computed to identify the degree of recommendation potential of each attribute of the product. These analysis phases were ordered in such a way that the study would not merely present a final acceptance score, but also clarify in which areas the product was doing so well, and where some further improvements were necessary.

## Result and Discussion

This section presents the findings of consumer acceptance testing of Muara Enim pindang innovation using kemang fruit as a substitute for conventional souring ingredients. The results are organized into four main parts. The first part describes the product innovation tested in the study. The second part presents the respondent profile to clarify the consumer background involved in the product assessment. The third part reports the Net Promoter Score results based on organoleptic attributes. The fourth part synthesizes the main strengths and weaknesses of the product as the basis for further product refinement and marketing direction.

### Product Innovation of Muara Enim Pindang

The product developed in this study was an innovation of Muara Enim pindang using kemang fruit as the main differentiating ingredient. Kemang was used as a substitute for tamarind and pineapple, which are commonly used to produce the sour taste in pindang. The innovation was designed to maintain the basic character of South Sumatran pindang while introducing a distinctive local ingredient that could strengthen the gastronomic identity of Muara Enim. The product was tested through consumer assessment of color, aroma, texture, and taste across three product components, namely fish component, broth, and condiments.

Table 1. Product Description of Muara Enim Pindang Innovation

Product Element	Description
Product name	Muara Enim pindang innovation
Main innovation	Use of kemang fruit as a substitute for tamarind and pineapple
Main ingredient	Patin fish
Supporting ingredients	Shallots, garlic, chili, galangal, ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, bay leaves, kemang, shrimp paste, palm sugar, salt, basil, and water
Product identity	Pindang with a distinctive sour profile derived from local kemang fruit
Product testing focus	Color, aroma, texture, and taste
Product components assessed	Fish component, broth, and condiments
Expected product contribution	Strengthening Muara Enim culinary identity through local ingredient based innovation

The product description indicates that the innovation is not merely a technical change in the recipe. The use of kemang gives the product a clearer local identity and creates a sensory distinction from more common pindang variants that rely on tamarind or pineapple. This is important because culinary innovation in a tourism context must offer both familiarity and novelty. The product still retains the recognizable structure of pindang, but it introduces a localized ingredient that can be positioned as a culinary marker of Muara Enim.

### Respondent Characteristics

A total of 93 consumers participated in the product acceptance test. The respondent profile shows that the majority of consumers were from younger and productive age groups, especially millennials and Generation Z. This pattern is important because younger consumers are often more open to product innovation, digital promotion, and experience based culinary consumption. The profile also shows that pindang consumption remains closely associated with family visits, moderate spending, and the growing use of digital payment.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Percentage
Age group	Millennials	64.5%
	Generation Z	28.0%
	Other age groups	7.5%
Occupation	Civil servants, military, or police	45.2%
	Private sector employees	25.8%
	Other occupations	29.0%
Domicile	Palembang	52.7%
	Muara Enim	22.6%
	Other areas in South Sumatra	21.5%
	Other domicile	3.2%
Visit pattern	With family	45.2%
	Other visit patterns	54.8%
Consumption frequency	One to two times per month	40.9%
	Other frequencies	59.1%
Spending per visit	Below Rp150,000	65.6%
	Rp150,000 or above	34.4%
Payment method	Cash	40.9%
	QRIS and e wallet	45.1%
	Other payment methods	14.0%

The data show that the potential consumer base for Muara Enim pindang innovation is dominated by consumers who are young, professionally active, and relatively familiar with digital transaction systems. Millennials represent the largest proportion of respondents at 64.5 percent, followed by Generation Z at 28.0 percent. This means that more than ninety percent of respondents came from age groups that are generally responsive to culinary novelty, visual presentation, and digital promotion. This profile provides an important foundation for interpreting the acceptance of the product because the tested innovation was assessed mainly by consumers who are likely to value both taste and experience.

The occupational profile further strengthens this interpretation. Civil servants, military personnel, police officers, and private sector employees form the dominant respondent groups. These categories suggest that the product was mostly assessed by consumers with regular

income and relatively stable purchasing capacity. This is supported by the spending pattern, where 65.6 percent of respondents reported expenditure below Rp150,000 per visit. The data indicate that the product has potential to be positioned within an affordable family and professional consumer segment rather than only as a premium culinary product.

The visit pattern also deserves attention. The largest proportion of respondents consumed pindang with family, reaching 45.2 percent. This shows that pindang is not only evaluated as an individual food preference, but also as part of a collective dining experience. Therefore, consumer acceptance of the product may depend not only on taste, but also on how well the product supports family based culinary consumption. The payment data also show that digital payment has become increasingly relevant, with QRIS and e wallet users reaching 45.1 percent. This finding suggests that the market for pindang innovation is already connected to contemporary transaction behavior.

### Net Promoter Score Results Based on Organoleptic Attributes

Consumer acceptance was measured using the Net Promoter Score framework. Respondents who gave scores from 0 to 6 were categorized as detractors, respondents who gave scores from 7 to 8 were categorized as passives, and respondents who gave scores from 9 to 10 were categorized as promoters. The NPS value was calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. The cumulative NPS score was positive at +30, indicating that the product received favorable acceptance from consumers, although the score also shows that the product still has room for improvement before it can become a strongly recommended culinary product.

Table 3. Net Promoter Score Results of Muara Enim Pindang Innovation

Indicator	Detractor	Promoter	NPS
Fish component color	15.05%	32.26%	17
Broth color	7.53%	37.63%	30
Condiment color	15.05%	19.35%	4
Fish component aroma	13.98%	34.41%	20
Broth aroma	17.20%	49.46%	32
Condiment aroma	8.60%	27.96%	19
Fish component texture	20.43%	47.31%	27
Broth texture	2.15%	56.99%	55
Condiment texture	6.45%	23.66%	17
Fish component taste	6.45%	61.29%	55
Broth taste	4.30%	63.44%	59
Condiment taste	11.83%	33.33%	22
Total	10.75%	40.59%	30

The NPS results reveal that the strongest consumer acceptance was concentrated in the core components of the product, especially broth taste, fish component taste, and broth texture. Broth taste obtained the highest NPS score of +59, with 63.44 percent of respondents classified as promoters and only 4.30 percent classified as detractors. This finding indicates that the use of kemang did not weaken the taste identity of pindang. On the contrary, the broth was perceived positively by a large proportion of consumers, suggesting that the sourness produced by kemang was acceptable and potentially distinctive.

Fish component taste and broth texture also received high NPS scores of +55. The strong score for fish component taste shows that the innovation was not accepted only at the level of broth,

but also in relation to the main food component. The broth texture score is also important because texture can influence the overall eating experience, especially in a soup based dish such as pindang. The low detractor percentage for broth texture, only 2.15 percent, indicates that very few consumers responded negatively to this attribute. This suggests that the technical preparation of the broth had reached an acceptable level in terms of mouthfeel and consistency.

However, the results also show that acceptance was not evenly distributed across all product attributes. Condiment color received the lowest NPS score at +4, followed by fish component color and condiment texture, each with an NPS score of +17. These relatively low values indicate that the supporting elements of the product were less persuasive than the main elements. This is an important finding because culinary acceptance is shaped not only by taste, but also by visual appeal and the coherence of all components served together. If the condiments and fish component appearance do not support the overall product impression, they may weaken the consumer's willingness to recommend the product even when the broth and taste are positively received.

### Classification of Product Strengths and Improvement Priorities

To clarify the meaning of the NPS results, the product attributes were grouped into three categories. Attributes with high scores were classified as product strengths. Attributes with moderate scores were classified as acceptable but still improvable. Attributes with lower scores were classified as priority areas for product refinement. This classification helps identify which aspects can be used as selling points and which aspects require further attention before wider promotion.

Table 4. Classification of Product Attributes Based on NPS Results

Classification	Product Attribute	NPS Score	Interpretation
Main product strengths	Broth taste	59	Strongly accepted and suitable as the main selling point
	Fish component taste	55	Strongly accepted and supports product differentiation
	Broth texture	55	Strongly accepted and strengthens eating experience
Accepted attributes	Broth aroma	32	Positively accepted but still requires consistency
	Broth color	30	Positively accepted and relatively aligned with consumer expectations
	Fish component texture	27	Accepted but not yet a dominant strength
	Condiment taste	22	Accepted but needs refinement
	Fish component aroma	20	Accepted but still needs improvement
	Condiment aroma	19	Accepted but not yet strong
Improvement priorities	Fish component color	17	Needs improvement in visual appeal
	Condiment texture	17	Needs improvement in supporting component quality

	Condiment color	4	The weakest attribute and should become the main refinement priority
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The classification confirms that the innovation has a strong foundation in taste. This is a meaningful result because taste remains the most central attribute in consumer acceptance of traditional food innovation. The high NPS scores for broth taste and fish component taste indicate that the use of kemang as a souring ingredient was not rejected by consumers. Instead, it contributed to a product experience that many respondents were willing to recommend. This finding gives the product a credible basis for further development as a distinctive Muara Enim culinary product.

At the same time, the lower scoring attributes show that the product still needs refinement before it can be promoted as a flagship culinary tourism product. The most urgent issue is condiment color, which received an NPS score of only +4. This score suggests that condiments did not contribute strongly to consumer enthusiasm and may have weakened the total product impression. Fish component color and condiment texture also require attention because both attributes influence first impressions and overall eating satisfaction. In culinary products, visual appeal often shapes consumer expectation before taste is evaluated. Therefore, improvement in color, plating, and supporting components could increase the overall recommendation potential of the product.

The moderate scores for broth aroma, broth color, fish component texture, condiment taste, fish component aroma, and condiment aroma indicate that these attributes were not rejected, but they also did not generate strong enthusiasm. This means that the product has passed the basic acceptance threshold but still requires refinement to move from acceptable to memorable. For a culinary tourism product, this distinction is important. A product that is merely acceptable may be consumed once, but a product that is memorable is more likely to be recommended, photographed, shared, and revisited.

The findings indicate that the innovation of Muara Enim pindang using kemang fruit has a strong basis for further development because consumer acceptance is anchored in the most decisive sensory elements of traditional cuisine, namely taste and broth texture. This result is important because innovation in traditional food often fails when novelty disrupts the core taste memory of consumers. In this study, kemang appears to function not as an intrusive modification, but as a local ingredient that enriches the sour profile of pindang while preserving its culinary identity. This aligns with recent studies arguing that local gastronomy becomes more competitive when innovation is rooted in regional ingredients rather than detached from tradition (Feldman & Wunderlich, 2023; Lee et al., 2022; Bani-Melhem et al., 2025). In the context of Muara Enim, the use of kemang therefore should not be framed merely as a recipe variation, but as a gastronomic identity strategy that can distinguish the product from other pindang variants in South Sumatra.

The high consumer response toward broth taste, fish component taste, and broth texture also confirms that sensory acceptance remains the foundation of culinary tourism products (Appiani et al., 2023; Basdeki et al., 2026; Cheng et al., 2026). Recent food tourism research shows that local food contributes to satisfaction and loyalty when it offers sensory pleasure, cultural meaning, and a memorable experience at the same time (Shin et al., 2026; Karahan & Karacabey, 2026; Kim et al., 2025). This means that the positive acceptance of pindang kemang should be interpreted beyond the technical success of formulation. The product has potential because consumers recognize its taste as acceptable, but the value of that acceptance becomes stronger when the taste is connected to Muara Enim's local story, ingredients, and culinary heritage. Similar findings were reported by Setiawan et al. (2024), who emphasized that

consumer perception of pindang products is shaped not only by flavor, but also by regional identity and product familiarity. Thus, the strength of pindang kemang lies in its ability to balance innovation and recognizability.

However, the lower scores on color, aroma, and condiment related attributes show that the product is not yet fully ready to be positioned as a flagship culinary tourism product without further refinement. Taste may create acceptance, but visual appearance and aroma often create the first emotional judgment before the food is consumed. This is consistent with Rahmania et al. (2025), who found that quality improvement in pindang products must consider consumer expectations across multiple sensory dimensions, not only taste. Schlosser (2024) also reminds that recommendation behavior is more complex than satisfaction alone because consumers recommend a product when the whole experience feels convincing. Therefore, weak visual and aromatic attributes may reduce word of mouth even when the main taste is accepted. In practical terms, the recipe does not need to be changed fundamentally, but the color balance, plating, freshness of condiments, and aroma release during serving need to be improved so that the sensory experience becomes more coherent.

The positive NPS result should also be read carefully because NPS measures recommendation potential, not merely liking. Baquero (2022) shows that NPS is useful in hospitality contexts because it links satisfaction with loyalty and recommendation, especially when gastronomy becomes a key part of the experience. In this article, the positive NPS suggests that pindang kemang has recommendation potential, but the score is still moderate. This means that consumers are generally willing to accept the innovation, but not all of them are emotionally strong enough to become active promoters. De Cleen et al. (2025) further emphasize that recommendation is influenced by emotional response and communication style, while Gitlin (2024) notes that NPS should be used diagnostically rather than treated as a final achievement. For this study, the most useful function of NPS is not only to claim that the product is accepted, but to identify which product attributes should become selling points and which attributes require correction before wider promotion.

The dominance of millennials and Generation Z among respondents strengthens the relevance of this product for contemporary culinary tourism. Younger consumers tend to be more open to food innovation, but they also expect food to be visually appealing, shareable, and connected to an authentic story. Orea Giner and Fusté Forné (2023) show that Generation Z food tourism behavior is shaped by sustainability, social media, time, budget, and personal values. This is relevant to the present study because pindang kemang combines local ingredients, affordable consumption patterns, and potential digital storytelling. Hasan et al. (2025) and Theresia Simangungsong et al. (2025) also indicate that social media, tourist experience, and brand awareness are increasingly important in culinary tourism promotion. Therefore, the marketing of pindang kemang should not rely only on taste claims, but should communicate the story of kemang, the locality of Muara Enim, and the uniqueness of the eating experience in a form that is attractive to young consumers.

The respondent profile also shows that pindang remains closely associated with family based dining. This finding is meaningful because local culinary products are often consumed not only as individual food choices, but as social experiences. Carvache Franco et al. (2025) found that personal relationships are one of the important dimensions shaping satisfaction and loyalty in local gastronomy tourism. In the present study, the family visit pattern suggests that pindang kemang can be developed as a communal culinary product rather than only as a single menu innovation. This supports the argument of Pratiyudha et al. (2023) and Taslim et al. (2023), who highlight that tourism experience and satisfaction are shaped by the wider consumption

setting. For Muara Enim, this means that product development should be accompanied by service design, family packages, comfortable eating spaces, and storytelling that makes the dish suitable for shared culinary experiences.

The growing use of QRIS and e wallet among respondents further indicates that culinary innovation must be supported by service innovation. Karo et al. (2024) argue that memorable tourism experience is increasingly connected with new wave marketing, where digital interaction, convenience, and consumer engagement become part of value creation. Jerez (2023) also shows that gastronomic tourism marketing requires attention not only to the product, but also to service, promotion, physical environment, process, and quality. In this regard, pindang kemang should be developed as a complete market offering. The product needs consistent taste, improved presentation, digital payment access, social media visibility, and collaboration with local tourism actors. Without these supporting elements, the product may remain accepted as food but fail to grow as a culinary tourism attraction.

the study contributes to culinary tourism development by showing that traditional food innovation can be accepted when it is built from local ingredients and evaluated through consumer recommendation potential. The findings are consistent with Mau et al. (2024), who argue that local culinary preservation can support local economic development, and with Yeboah (2024), who explains that local food can become a tourism product when it is promoted as part of cultural experience. Nevertheless, the study also shows that acceptance is not the same as readiness for full market positioning. Pindang kemang has a strong foundation in taste, but still needs refinement in visual quality, aroma, condiment presentation, and experience design. Therefore, the most important implication is that Muara Enim pindang innovation should be developed through a dual strategy, namely strengthening the sensory quality of the product and building a clear local brand narrative around kemang as a distinctive gastronomic identity.

## Conclusion

for tamarind and pineapple was positively accepted by consumers in the initial product testing stage. The cumulative NPS score of +30 shows that the product has recommendation potential, with the strongest attributes found in broth taste, fish component taste, and broth texture. These findings indicate that kemang can strengthen the local identity of pindang without weakening its core sensory appeal.

However, the product still requires refinement, especially in condiment color, fish component color, and condiment texture. The dominance of millennials and Generation Z, family based visits, and increasing digital payment use also suggest that pindang kemang has potential to be developed through marketing strategies based on local identity, family oriented culinary experience, and digital accessibility. Future development should focus on improving visual presentation, maintaining taste consistency, and expanding testing with broader consumer groups.

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