

ANALYSIS OF RICE CONSUMER PROFILE AND PREFERENCES IN PAGAR MERBAU DISTRICT

Fuad Balatif, Ichpan Zulfansyah, Irshad Ahmad Reshi

Agribusiness Study Program, Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Alwashliyah, Medan
Agrotechnology Study Program, Faculty of Agriculture, Universitas Alwashliyah, Medan
Annamalay University India

Correspondence Email: balatiffuad673@gmail.com,

Received : 01 October 2022

Accepted

: 25 October 2022

Revised : 05 October 2022

Published

: 30 October 2022

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characteristics and preferences of consumers in consuming rice, both local and national superior rice in Pagar Merbau District. The method used was a survey with an accidental sampling technique on 120 respondents consisting of 105 local rice consumers and 15 national rice consumers. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed using descriptive methods. The results showed that local rice consumers were dominated by the productive age group 26–35 years (36.19%), female (61.90%), had a high school or bachelor's degree, and had incomes in the middle to high range. Meanwhile, national rice consumers tended to be from an older age group, dominated by women (80%), with relatively lower education levels and lower incomes. In general, factors such as age, education, number of dependents, occupation, and income influenced rice consumption preferences. Consumers with higher economic levels and education tended to choose local rice, while consumers with economic limitations preferred national rice.

Keywords : Profile, Preferences, Consumers, Rice

INTRODUCTION

Rice is a primary food commodity that plays a vital role in Indonesian life. As a staple food, rice is consumed by almost all levels of society, regardless of socioeconomic status. According to Amang and Sawit (1999), rice not only serves as a primary energy source but also has strategic value in maintaining economic stability and national food security. Over time, rice in Indonesia has been divided into two main types: national superior rice and local superior rice. National superior rice is generally developed to increase productivity and production efficiency, while local superior rice has distinctive characteristics such as aroma, taste, and texture (Ministry of Agriculture, 2011). These differences in characteristics lead to variations in consumer preferences when choosing the type of rice they consume. Consumer behavior in choosing food products is greatly influenced by various factors, both internal and external. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumer characteristics can be seen from demographic aspects such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income, which will influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, cultural and social factors also play a role in shaping consumer preferences for a product. In the context of rice consumption, education and income levels significantly influence consumer choices. Consumers with higher levels of education tend to pay more attention to product quality and nutritional content, while consumers with lower incomes are more concerned with price (Sumarwan, 2011). This suggests that consumption decisions are based not only on basic needs but also on perceptions and economic capacity. Pagar Merbau District is a region with a high level of population heterogeneity, both socially, economically, and culturally. This diversity allows for variations in rice consumption patterns within the community. Therefore, this research is important to understand consumer characteristics and the factors influencing their preferences in choosing superior local and national rice.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted on October 22, 2022, using a survey method with a quantitative descriptive approach. The survey method was used to obtain direct data from respondents regarding rice consumption characteristics and preferences. According to Sugiyono (2017), the survey method is a research method used to

obtain data from a specific, natural setting by distributing questionnaires or conducting interviews with respondents.

Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted in Pagar Merbau District. The location was selected purposively, considering that this region has a high level of population heterogeneity in terms of social, economic, and cultural aspects, making it suitable for analyzing rice consumer characteristics. The research was conducted over a period of approximately two months.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was all households consuming rice in Pagar Merbau District. The sample consisted of 120 respondents, consisting of:

- 105 consumers of local superior rice
- 15 national superior rice consumers

The sampling technique used *accidental sampling*, which is a sampling technique based on chance, where anyone the researcher encounters and meets the criteria can be made a respondent. According to Sugiyono (2017), accidental sampling is included in non-probability sampling which is used when researchers have limited time and access to the population.

Data Types and Sources

- **Primary data**, namely data obtained directly from respondents through interviews and questionnaires
- **Secondary data**, namely data obtained from literature, journals, and other sources relevant to the research

According to Arikunto (2013), primary data is data collected directly by researchers from primary sources, while secondary data is supporting data obtained from documents or other available sources.

Data collection technique

1. **Interview**, which is a direct question and answer process with respondents to obtain more in-depth information.
2. **Questionnaire**, namely a list of questions given to respondents to collect data related to consumer characteristics

According to Nazir (2014), the use of questionnaires in survey research aims to obtain data that is structured and easy to analyze.

Research Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic group
- Number of family dependents
- Level of education
- Work
- Income

These variables are included in the demographic characteristics which, according to Kotler and Keller (2016), have a significant influence on consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained were analyzed using **quantitative descriptive analysis**, namely by grouping the data into frequency and percentage distribution tables, then interpreted to explain consumer characteristics.

According to Sugiyono (2017), descriptive analysis is used to describe or illustrate data that has been collected without intending to draw generally applicable conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Consumer Characteristics Based on Age

No	Age	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	20–25 years	15	2	14.29	13.33
2	26–35 years	38	4	36.19	26.67
3	36–45 years	30	5	28.57	33.33
4	46–55 years	14	3	13.33	20
5	>55 years	8	1	7.62	6.67
Amount		105	15	100	100

Research results show that local rice consumers are predominantly in the productive age group, aged 26–35. This suggests that this age group tends to be more selective in choosing food products. According to Sumarwan (2011), age influences a person's consumption patterns because it is related to their level of need, lifestyle, and awareness of product quality. Meanwhile, national rice consumers tend to be from older age groups. This may be attributed to long-established consumption habits. Kotler and Keller (2016) state that past experiences and habits significantly influence purchasing decisions, particularly among older consumers.

2. Characteristics Based on Gender

No	Gender	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	Man	40	3	38.1	20
2	Woman	65	12	61.9	80
Amount		105	15	100	100

Women's dominance in rice consumption indicates that women play a significant role in household decision-making, particularly in meeting food needs. According to Engel et al. (1995), women tend to be more involved in daily purchasing activities due to their role as household managers. Furthermore, women tend to pay more attention to the quality and nutritional value of food than men. This aligns with Sumarwan's (2011) opinion, which states that gender factors influence consumer behavior in choosing food products.

3. Characteristics Based on Tribe

No	Ethnic group	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	Malay	25	3	23.81	20
2	Java	42	5	40	33.33
3	Batak	20	4	19.05	26.67
4	Minang	10	2	9.52	13.33
5	Other	8	1	7.62	6.67
Amount		105	15	100	100

The research results show that Javanese people dominate local rice consumption. This suggests that culture plays a significant role in determining consumption preferences. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), culture is a major factor influencing consumer behavior because it is related to values, habits, and traditions passed down through generations. The preference for local rice, with its distinctive texture and aroma, also indicates a suitability to specific cultural preferences. This reinforces the idea that cultural factors are a key determinant in food product selection.

4. Characteristics Based on the Number of Family Dependents

No	Liability	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	1–2 people	30	4	28.57	26.67
2	3–4 people	50	6	47.62	40
3	>4 people	25	5	23.81	33.33
Amount		105	15	100	100

Most respondents had 3–4 dependents, indicating a common nuclear family structure in urban communities. Local rice consumption was more prevalent in this group, indicating that families with moderate size tend to choose quality. Conversely, in families with more than four members, national rice consumption increases. This is due to economic considerations, as larger families are more price-sensitive and therefore choose more affordable rice. The number of family members influences consumption levels and purchasing decisions. In this study, families with larger numbers tended to choose national rice. This was due to economic considerations. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), family size influences consumption and product preferences. Large families tend to be more price-sensitive, choosing more economical products over premium ones.

5. Characteristics Based on Education Level

No	Education	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	Elementary School	10	3	9.52	20
2	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	18	4	17.14	26.67
3	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	35	5	33.33	33.33
4	Diploma	15	2	14.29	13.33
5	Bachelor	27	1	25.71	6.67
Amount		105	15	100	100

Education level influences consumer mindsets and behavior when choosing products. Consumers with higher education levels are more likely to choose local rice, indicating an awareness of quality and nutritional value. According to Sumarwan (2011), education influences consumers' ability to evaluate product information. Highly educated consumers tend to be more rational and consider quality over price.

6. Characteristics Based on Job

No	Work	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	Housewife	45	10	42.86	66.67
2	civil servant	20	2	19.05	13.33
3	Private	18	2	17.14	13.33
4	Self-employed	22	1	20.95	6.67
Amount		105	15	100	100

Occupation type is closely related to consumer income level and lifestyle. In this study, local rice consumers were predominantly from active employment groups such as civil servants and self-employed individuals. This is in line with the opinion of Engel et al. (1995), who stated that employment influences a person's purchasing power and consumption patterns. Consumers with permanent employment tend to have stable incomes and therefore prefer quality products.

7. Characteristics Based on Income

No	Income (Rp)	Local (Org)	National (Org)	Local (%)	National (%)
1	<1,000,000	12	5	11.43	33.33
2	1–2 million	30	6	28.57	40
3	2–3 million	28	3	26.67	20
4	3–5 million	20	1	19.05	6.67
5	>5 million	15	0	14.29	0
Amount		105	15	100	100

Income is a major factor influencing purchasing decisions. Research shows that high-income consumers prefer local rice, while low-income consumers prefer national rice. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), income determines a consumer's ability to purchase a product. Consumers with high incomes tend to choose better quality products, while consumers with low incomes consider price as the primary factor.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there are quite clear differences in characteristics between consumers of local superior rice and national superior rice in Pagar Merbau District. Local rice consumers are dominated by the productive age group (26–35 years), are female, have a relatively higher level of education (high school and college), and are at the middle to high income level. In addition, consumers with a moderate number of dependents (3–4 people) are more likely to choose local rice because they consider quality and taste. Meanwhile, consumers of national rice are mostly from the older age group, dominated by women, with relatively lower levels of education and income. Consumers with large families tend to choose national rice because of more affordable prices. Overall, socioeconomic factors such as education, occupation, and income have a significant influence on consumer preferences in choosing types of rice. Consumers with higher purchasing power tend to choose local rice which is considered to have better quality, while consumers with lower purchasing power prefer national rice as a more economical alternative.

REFERENCES

- Amang, B., & Sawit, MH (1999). *National rice and food policy*. Bogor: Bogor Agricultural University Press.
- Arikunto, S. (2013). *Research procedures: A practical approach*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Department of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia. (2011). *Superior rice varieties*. Jakarta: Ministry of Agriculture.
- Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (1995). *Consumer behavior* (8th ed.). Orlando: The Dryden Press.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1250103>
- Nazir, M. (2014). *Research methods*. Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. (2015). *Consumer behavior* (11th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Quantitative, qualitative, and R&D research methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Sumarwan, U. (2011). *Consumer behavior: Theory and its application in marketing*. Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia.