

Consumer Perception and Market Entry Strategy for a Novel MOCAF-Based All-Purpose Seasoning

Persepsi Konsumen dan Strategi Masuk Pasar untuk Produk Tepung Bumbu Serbaguna Berbasis MOCAF yang Inovatif

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze consumer perceptions and preferences regarding a novel all-purpose seasoning based on Modified Cassava Flour (MOCAF) and to formulate an effective market entry strategy. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, combining sensory evaluations and structured consumer surveys. Sensory evaluation involved 35 panelists who compared the MOCAF-based seasoning with two commercial brands, assessing attributes including taste, aroma, texture, and overall appearance. Results from the consumer survey indicated positive perceptions of the MOCAF-based seasoning, with respondents rating it favorably in terms of taste (74%), aroma (75%), and overall appeal (70%). However, price sensitivity emerged as a significant concern, with approximately 23% of respondents highlighting affordability as an issue. Demographic factors, especially education level and occupation, significantly influenced consumer perceptions. Housewives, in particular, showed greater awareness and familiarity with the product. Based on these findings, an integrated market entry strategy was developed, emphasizing market segmentation, targeting health-conscious households, particularly mothers and homemakers, and positioning the product as a healthier, gluten-free alternative to conventional seasonings. The study further recommends the implementation of educational campaigns, partnerships with influencers, and product sampling programs to enhance product awareness and build consumer trust. This research contributes to the existing body of literature on functional foods, particularly regarding sustainable local food innovations in emerging markets. The results provide practical insights for producers aiming to introduce MOCAF-based

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products to broader markets.

Keywords: *All-Purpose Seasoning; Consumer Behaviour;
Gluten-Free Products; Market Entry Strategy;
Market Segmentation; Modified Cassava Flour
(MOCAF)*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi dan preferensi konsumen terhadap bumbu serbaguna inovatif berbahan dasar Modified Cassava Flour (MOCAF), serta merumuskan strategi masuk pasar yang efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif deskriptif dengan menggabungkan evaluasi sensori dan survei konsumen terstruktur. Evaluasi sensori melibatkan 35 panelis yang membandingkan bumbu berbasis MOCAF dengan dua merek komersial, dengan menilai atribut seperti rasa, aroma, tekstur, dan penampilan secara keseluruhan. Hasil survei konsumen menunjukkan persepsi positif terhadap bumbu berbasis MOCAF, dengan responden memberikan penilaian tinggi terhadap rasa (74%), aroma (75%), dan daya tarik keseluruhan (70%). Namun, sensitivitas terhadap harga muncul sebagai perhatian utama, dengan sekitar 23% responden menyatakan kekhawatiran terkait keterjangkauan produk. Faktor demografis, terutama tingkat pendidikan dan jenis pekerjaan, secara signifikan memengaruhi persepsi konsumen. Ibu rumah tangga, khususnya, menunjukkan tingkat kesadaran dan familiaritas yang lebih tinggi terhadap produk ini. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dikembangkan strategi masuk pasar yang terintegrasi, dengan penekanan pada segmentasi pasar, menargetkan rumah tangga yang peduli kesehatan, terutama ibu dan pengelola rumah tangga, dan memposisikan produk sebagai alternatif bumbu yang lebih sehat dan bebas gluten dibandingkan produk konvensional. Studi ini juga merekomendasikan pelaksanaan kampanye edukatif, kerja sama dengan influencer, dan program sampel produk guna meningkatkan kesadaran serta membangun kepercayaan konsumen. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap literatur yang berkembang mengenai pangan fungsional, khususnya dalam konteks inovasi pangan lokal yang berkelanjutan di pasar negara berkembang.

Temuan ini menawarkan wawasan praktis bagi produsen yang ingin memperkenalkan produk berbasis MOCAF ke pasar yang lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: *Bumbu Serbaguna; Perilaku Konsumen; Produk Bebas Gluten; Segmentasi Pasar; Strategi Masuk Pasar; Tepung Singkong Termodifikasi (MOCAF)*

1. Introduction

Modified cassava flour (MOCAF) has gained prominence as a gluten-free alternative to wheat flour. Produced through controlled lactic-acid fermentation, commonly using *Lactobacillus plantarum*, MOCAF exhibits superior functional properties, including enhanced expansion and water-holding capacities (Asmoro, 2021). These attributes, together with a rising demand for healthier foods, have driven the formulation of MOCAF-based products that accommodate contemporary consumer preferences (El Khoury et al., 2018; Hastati et al., 2024).

Cassava is both an economic and cultural staple in Indonesia, yet its transformation into higher-value products such as MOCAF remains limited. Asmoro (2021) demonstrates that substituting wheat flour with MOCAF at levels ranging from 20 to 100 percent is technologically viable, underscoring its potential as a sustainable ingredient for functional-food diversification.

Although MOCAF's technological and nutritional advantages are well documented, consumer attitudes toward MOCAF-based innovations, particularly seasonings, have received little attention. A MOCAF all-purpose seasoning aligns with two salient market trends: demand for convenient, ready-to-cook solutions and a preference for gluten-free, perceived-safe foods. Successful market penetration, however, depends not only on technical innovation but also on how consumers judge sensory attributes and value functional benefits.

Grounded in consumer-behaviour theory, which posits that demographics such as education and occupation shape purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016), and guided by the segmentation-targeting-positioning (STP) framework, this study seeks to (i) analyse consumer perceptions and preferences regarding a MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning and (ii) devise a market-entry strategy that resonates with demographic profiles and consumer expectations.

The findings are expected to enrich discussions on functional-food marketing and support the commercialisation of locally sourced food innovations in emerging economies.

2. Research Methods

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative design to examine consumer perceptions and formulate a market entry strategy for a novel all-purpose seasoning made from Modified Cassava Flour (MOCAF). The research was conducted between September and October 2024 at the Food Processing Laboratory, under the Food Quality Assurance Supervisor Study Program, Vocational School, IPB University.

The research was structured into three main stages: product formulation, sensory evaluation, and a consumer perception survey. In the formulation stage, MOCAF was blended

with selected spices to develop a seasoning flour optimized for flavor, texture, and frying stability.

Sensory evaluation involved 35 trained panelists who assessed the MOCAF-based seasoning against two leading commercial brands. Fried tempeh samples seasoned with each product were evaluated based on color, aroma, taste, texture, and overall appearance using a 9-point hedonic scale, where 1 indicated “dislike extremely” and 9 indicated “like extremely.”

Following the sensory test, a structured questionnaire was distributed to 82 purposively selected respondents from diverse demographic backgrounds, including variations in age, educational level, and occupation. The questionnaire assessed consumer perceptions of sensory quality, packaging design, price point, and purchase intention. Prior to full deployment, the instrument was pilot-tested with 10 individuals to evaluate clarity and reliability. The pre-test yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize consumer preferences and demographic characteristics. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to explore the influence of demographic factors on perception and purchasing behavior. When significant effects were identified, Tukey’s post hoc tests were conducted to determine intergroup differences. The significance threshold was established at $p < 0.05$.

This sequential research approach enabled a comprehensive analysis of both the sensory appeal and market viability of the MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning.

Table 1. Statements on Consumer Perceptions of Taste

No.	Statement
1	The spices in the MOCAF-based seasoning effectively penetrate the product or tempeh.
2	No additional seasoning is required when using the MOCAF-based product.
3	The fried food remains crispy, flavorful, and palatable for 3–4 hours.
4	The balance between flour and spices is optimal.
5	The product does not contain harmful ingredients and is certified halal.
6	It is suitable for frying various food items, such as fish, chicken, shrimp, tofu, and tempeh.

Note. MOCAF = Modified Cassava Flour.

Table 2. Consumer Preference Statements for the MOCAF-Based All-Purpose Seasoning

No.	Statement
1	The packaging color is visually appealing.
2	The price is considered affordable and appropriate for the product size:
	- Small (100 g) = IDR 15,000
	- Medium (150 g) = IDR 20,000
	- Large (200 g) = IDR 25,000
	(Equivalent in USD may be added for international audiences.)
3	The taste of the seasoning is pleasant and well-suited to consumer preferences.

Note. MOCAF = Modified Cassava Flour; IDR = Indonesian Rupiah.

Table 3. Likert Scale for Questionnaire Responses

Response Option	Scale Value
Strongly Agree (SA)	7
Agree (A)	6
Somewhat Agree (SWA)	5
Neutral (N)	4
Somewhat Disagree (SWD)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1

3. Results

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding respondents' demographic profiles is fundamental to interpreting their perceptions and preferences for the novel MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning. Variables such as age, educational attainment, and occupation inform segmentation and targeting strategies for market entry.

Table 4 details the distribution of respondents by age group, Table 5 summarizes their highest level of education, and Table 6 outlines their occupational backgrounds. These characteristics provide the foundation for subsequent analyses of differences in perception and purchasing behavior.

Table 4. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age group (years)	<i>n</i>	%
17–29	12	14.6
30–39	8	9.8
40–49	28	34.1
50–59	23	28.0
60–69	9	11.0
70–79	2	2.4
Total	82	100.0

The largest cohort falls within the 40–49-year bracket (34.1 percent), followed by those aged 50–59 years (28.0 percent). This middle-aged segment typically possesses greater purchasing power and often guides household food expenditures.

Table 5. Educational Attainment of Respondents

Education level	<i>n</i>	%
Primary school	4	4.9
Junior high school	7	8.5
Senior high school	44	53.7
Diploma (D1–D4)	11	13.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	16	19.5
Total	82	100.0

More than half of the participants (53.7 percent) had completed senior high school, and nearly one-fifth (19.5 percent) held at least a bachelor's degree. This relatively well-educated consumer base is receptive to product messages emphasizing health and functional benefits.

Table 6. Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	<i>n</i>	%
Student	5	6.1
Homemaker	51	62.2
Civil servant or state-owned-enterprise staff	10	12.2
Other*	16	19.5
Total	82	100.0

*Includes private-sector employees, entrepreneurs or self-employed individuals, laborers or workers, farmers, traders or vendors, and mechanics.

A substantial majority of respondents (62.2 percent) identified as homemakers, underscoring their pivotal role in household food purchasing and highlighting them as a primary target segment for the MOCAF-based seasoning.

3.2. Sensory Evaluation Results

Sensory evaluation provides critical insight into consumer acceptance of the MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning. Thirty-five trained panelists compared the product with two leading commercial seasonings (Brand A and Brand B), rating taste, aroma, texture, and overall appearance on a nine-point hedonic scale. The results, summarized in Table 7, position the MOCAF formulation ahead of its competitors on every attribute assessed.

Table 7. Sensory Evaluation of MOCAF-Based Seasoning Compared with Commercial Brands

Sensory attribute	MOCAF-based seasoning	Brand A	Brand B
Taste (%)	69	65	61
Aroma (%)	75	72	68
Texture (%)	66	63	60
Overall appearance (%)	70	67	64

Note. Percentages indicate the proportion of panelists assigning ratings in the “like moderately” to “like extremely” range on a nine-point hedonic scale. MOCAF = Modified Cassava Flour.

Panelists expressed the greatest enthusiasm for the seasoning's aroma: 75 percent placed it in the favorable range, outscoring Brand A by three points and Brand B by seven. Taste followed closely at 69 percent, again exceeding both commercial benchmarks. Although texture differences were narrower, the MOCAF product maintained a three-point margin over Brand A and a six-point margin over Brand B, indicating satisfactory crispness in fried applications. Overall appearance was rated positively by 70 percent of panelists, reinforcing the product's visual appeal and confirming its competitive advantage across all evaluated dimensions.

3.3. Consumer Perceptions and Preferences

Consumer perception is pivotal to the market success of any new product. This section reports survey findings on how respondents view the MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning with respect to packaging, price, and taste, attributes known to shape purchasing decisions and product positioning (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Table 8. Consumer Preferences for the MOCAF-Based Seasoning

Attribute	Response option	% of respondents
Packaging	Strongly agree	20
	Agree	72
	Disagree	5
	Strongly disagree	2
Price	Strongly agree	11
	Agree	49
	Disagree	17
	Strongly disagree	23
Taste	Strongly agree	35
	Agree	74
	Disagree	18
	Strongly disagree	3

Note. Percentages may not total 100 because respondents could skip items. MOCAF = Modified Cassava Flour.

Most participants judged the packaging to be visually appealing: 92 percent fell in the “agree” or “strongly agree” categories. Taste ratings were similarly favorable, with 109 percent of responses in the top two categories; this aligns with the product’s strong showing in sensory evaluation. Price elicited more mixed reactions: although 60 percent viewed the price as reasonable, nearly one quarter strongly disagreed, indicating that cost sensitivity could impede wider adoption.

3.4. Influence of Demographic Factors

To determine whether age, education, and occupation shaped these perceptions, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed. Table 9 summarizes the results.

Table 9. ANOVA Results for Demographic Influences on Consumer Perception

Demographic factor	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial η^2
Age	2.63	.082	.04
Education level	3.72	.033*	.06
Occupation	4.81	.002**	.08

Note. $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$.

Education level and occupation had significant effects on consumer evaluations. Respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher showed greater awareness of MOCAF's health benefits and expressed stronger purchase intent, corroborating prior work linking education to functional-food adoption (Ares & Gámbaro, 2007). Occupation was also influential: homemakers registered the highest mean perception scores, consistent with their primary role in household food selection. Although the age effect trended positive, it did not reach significance ($p = .082$), suggesting that age is a weaker predictor in this context.

Overall, the data point to two actionable insights: (a) educational messaging that emphasizes the functional advantages of MOCAF is likely to resonate with highly educated consumers, and (b) promotional efforts should prioritize homemakers, who appear most receptive and exercise direct control over grocery purchases.

4. Discussion

4.1. Interpretation of Sensory and Preference Results

The sensory evaluation showed that the Modified Cassava Flour (MOCAF) seasoning outperformed both commercial comparators in taste and aroma (Table 7). These attributes are pivotal, as flavor and fragrance consistently rank among the strongest predictors of purchase intention in condiments and snack applications (El Khoury et al., 2018). The product's favorable sensory profile therefore positions it as a credible competitor in an established market segment. Survey findings further indicated that 72 percent of respondents judged the packaging to be visually appealing (Table 8). Eye-catching design can increase shelf impact and facilitate first-time trials, particularly in retail environments dominated by impulse purchases. By contrast, price elicited more ambivalent responses: nearly one quarter of participants viewed the product as too expensive. Although premium pricing can signal quality, the data suggest that price-sensitive consumers may require clearer value cues, such as larger pack sizes or introductory promotions, to overcome cost concerns.

4.2. Impact of Demographic Characteristics

Analysis of variance revealed significant effects for education and occupation (Table 9). Respondents holding a bachelor's degree or higher displayed greater appreciation of the seasoning's functional attributes, a finding consistent with research linking education to enhanced information processing and health-oriented decision making (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Occupation also mattered: homemakers reported the highest awareness and acceptance levels. Given their central role in household food procurement, this group constitutes a strategically important target segment. Communication that emphasizes the seasoning's convenience and health benefits is likely to resonate with homemakers, who typically balance nutritional considerations with time constraints (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).

In sum, the seasoning's strong sensory appeal and favorable reception among well-educated consumers and homemakers underscore its market potential. Nonetheless, a calibrated pricing strategy, supported by value-oriented messaging, will be critical to achieving broad-based adoption.

4.3. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis highlights the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats facing the MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Table 10. SWOT Profile of the MOCAF-Based Seasoning

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Gluten-free positioning and functional-food appeal. • Locally sourced cassava supports sustainability. • Halal certification broadens acceptance in Muslim-majority markets.	• Perceived as expensive by price-sensitive consumers. • Low consumer awareness of MOCAF as an ingredient. • Limited brand equity relative to established competitors.
Opportunities	Threats
• Rising demand for healthy, gluten-free products. • Growth of e-commerce and modern retail channels for niche foods.	• Intense competition from entrenched seasoning brands. • Potential consumer reluctance to adopt unfamiliar ingredients.

The MOCAF-based seasoning exhibits several key strengths that support its market potential. Its gluten-free formulation aligns well with the preferences of health-conscious consumers, while the use of locally sourced cassava reinforces sustainability narratives. Additionally, halal certification enhances its appeal, particularly in Indonesia and other Muslim-majority markets, where dietary compliance is a significant purchasing consideration.

However, the product also faces notable weaknesses. Price sensitivity emerged as a concern among consumers, with some perceiving the product as relatively expensive compared to conventional alternatives. Another major limitation is the low level of public awareness surrounding MOCAF as a novel ingredient, which poses challenges for both market penetration and brand recognition.

On the opportunity side, the growing global demand for functional and allergen-free food products presents a favorable market context. The expansion of digital retail and e-commerce platforms further opens accessible pathways to reach targeted consumer segments, particularly those seeking healthier food innovations. These channels could be instrumental in building visibility and trial among early adopters.

Nonetheless, the product must contend with significant external threats. Competition from established seasoning brands with strong brand loyalty, extensive distribution, and greater promotional resources poses a considerable barrier to entry. Additionally, cultural reluctance to adopt unfamiliar food ingredients may slow acceptance of MOCAF among more traditional consumer segments.

To address these challenges, the brand must implement a value-oriented pricing strategy and invest in educational campaigns to raise consumer awareness about the health benefits and culinary versatility of MOCAF. By doing so, it can better position itself in a competitive market and capitalize on emerging consumer trends.

4.4. Implications for a Market Entry Strategy

A market entry plan for the MOCAF-based seasoning should integrate segmentation, targeting, positioning, and promotion, consistent with established strategic marketing frameworks (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

1) Segmentation

The most attractive segment comprises health-oriented consumers and households that actively seek gluten-free, functional foods. Rising awareness of diet-related health risks has enlarged this market. A secondary segment includes middle-income professionals who value convenient, ready-to-use meal solutions that align with healthier eating patterns.

2) Targeting

Households, specifically mothers and homemakers, should be prioritised. This group wields substantial influence over grocery purchases and meal planning, making them pivotal for driving adoption of the seasoning.

3) Positioning

The product should be positioned as a healthier, functional alternative to conventional seasonings. Marketing messages need to underscore its gluten-free formulation, functional attributes, and local cassava sourcing, thereby integrating health and sustainability appeals that resonate with contemporary consumer values.

4) Promotional Strategy

A two-pronged promotional approach is recommended. First, educational campaigns should communicate the seasoning's gluten-free and functional benefits, using social media and credible influencers to reach health-conscious communities. Second, in-store and online sampling programmes will facilitate product trial and build confidence in quality. These initiatives can be complemented by point-of-purchase materials that highlight the seasoning's unique attributes.



Figure 1. Design of the Modified Cassava Flour-Based All-Purpose Seasoning

Figure 1 depicts the proposed MOCAF-based all-purpose seasoning package design, which foregrounds health benefits and local ingredients to attract families seeking convenient yet nutritious meal solutions.

5. Conclusion

This study advances understanding of consumer responses to an all-purpose seasoning formulated with modified cassava flour (MOCAF). Sensory testing confirmed high acceptance, especially for taste and aroma, attributes that strongly influence purchase intent. The product's gluten-free composition and functional properties further enhance its appeal in a health-conscious market segment.

Demographic analyses showed that education and occupation shape awareness and preference, underscoring the strategic value of targeting households, particularly mothers and homemakers, who guide most food purchases. Accordingly, marketing efforts should integrate educational messaging and credible influencer partnerships to build trust and drive trial.

The SWOT assessment highlighted substantive strengths, health positioning and locally sourced ingredients, while also revealing challenges, notably price sensitivity and limited familiarity with MOCAF. Effective market entry will therefore require a balanced pricing strategy, clear health-oriented positioning, and sustained promotional activity.

Overall, the findings offer actionable guidance for firms entering the functional-food sector with MOCAF-based products. Future research should examine long-term consumption patterns and evaluate how different promotional tactics influence adoption over time.

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