

Unlocking Consumer Preferences: Exploring the Key Factors Influencing Fermented Beverage Choices in Indonesia

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Article Info

Article History:

Published: 11 Feb 2026

Publication Issue:

Volume 3, Issue 2

February-2026

Page Number:

218-227

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Abstract:

Fermented beverages are known for their health benefits, but their consumption in Indonesia remains low and inconsistent. While previous studies have explored the health benefits of these beverages, limited research has focused on the factors influencing consumer preferences, particularly external factors such as social media and family influence. Most studies have concentrated on product quality or nutritional content, overlooking factors like packaging, price, and availability, which may significantly affect consumer decisions. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the factors influencing consumer preferences for fermented beverages in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression, the study analyzes five key factors: availability, personal factors, family, media, and product. Data were collected through an online survey with 145 respondents, focusing on preference indicators like taste, price, packaging, volume, and serving temperature. The results show that personal and product factors negatively influence consumer preferences, with consumers favoring practical packaging, lower prices, and sweeter tastes. In contrast, availability, family influence, and media influence did not significantly impact purchase decisions. The average value for personal factors was 2.17, suggesting that while consumers are aware of the health benefits, practical factors like price and packaging have a greater influence. Based on these findings, it is recommended that producers offer more affordable products with appealing packaging and increase education on the health benefits to boost consumption in the Indonesian market.

Keywords: fermented beverages, consumer preferences, health benefits, factors determined, personal factors, product factors

1. Introduction

Fermented beverages are a type of functional food that has long been known for its various health benefits, particularly in maintaining gut microbiota balance, enhancing immunity, and improving digestive systems (Nuraida, 2015). The fermentation process carried out by microorganisms such as lactic acid bacteria or yeast results in bioactive compounds, enzymes, and probiotics that have a positive impact on human health (García-Barón et al., 2025). In Indonesia, fermented beverages have become part of the traditional culinary culture, as reflected in products such as *dadih*, *tape*, and *tempeh* (Surono, 2016; Pramana et al., 2025). These fermented products not only offer a unique taste but also have high nutritional value, especially in supporting digestion and boosting the immune system.

Indonesia has a significant potential to develop a fermented beverage market based on local ingredients and traditional techniques. This potential is supported by the abundance of natural resources, which can be utilized to produce fermented beverages that are not only delicious but also healthy. However, despite this potential, healthy consumption has not yet become a dominant pattern in society. Without more effective educational

interventions, market preferences are likely to continue to be dominated by practical forms of fermented products that are low in functional value, such as fermented beverages that rely more on additives or modern processing methods that reduce the natural nutritional content of the product.

Although fermented beverages have significant health benefits, their consumption in Indonesia is still relatively low and irregular. Several studies show that the low consumer preference for fermented products is due to the limited public understanding of the health benefits offered, as well as a stronger preference for commercial attributes such as sweet taste, low price, and practical packaging (Pamungkaningtyas & Mariyatun, 2018; Wakiah et al., 2025). This is exacerbated by low nutritional literacy in the population, which causes many consumers to choose industrially fermented products with more attractive packaging and flavor, even though these products do not fully support probiotic health, such as flavored yogurt drinks or probiotic beverages in plastic packaging (Pothoulaki et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the main factors that drive or hinder consumers in choosing and purchasing fermented beverage products.

Previous studies have largely focused on the health benefits of fermented products, such as the probiotic content and functional nutrition offered (Marsh et al., 2014; Whelan & Jones, 2022). However, more in-depth studies on the factors influencing consumer preferences are still limited. Previous research often focuses only on health aspects or product quality, without exploring the interactions between external factors such as social media or recommendations from friends/family, which can strengthen consumers' purchase intentions. Product availability in the market is also a key challenge because, although fermented products are increasingly recognized, their distribution remains limited in some regions, especially in areas that do not have adequate distribution networks for functional products (Borges et al., 2025).

Product packaging also plays an important role in influencing consumers' perceptions of product quality and benefits. Many studies show that consumers are more interested in products with attractive packaging that functions to preserve quality and provide information about the health benefits contained in the product (Whelan & Jones, 2022). Meanwhile, although consumers are becoming more aware of the health benefits of fermented beverages, the higher price compared to other beverage products often becomes the main barrier in purchase decisions, particularly for price-sensitive market segments (Goyal et al., 2019).

Furthermore, social media has a significant influence on the formation of consumer preferences for functional products like fermented beverages. According to recent studies, the influence of social media and recommendations from friends or relatives can increase consumer awareness and purchase interest in these products (Carneiro et al., 2024). Consumers exposed to information about the health benefits of fermented products through digital platforms are more likely to try these products and incorporate them into their daily routines.

While various studies have identified factors influencing consumer purchase decisions, there remains a research gap regarding how the interactions between external and internal factors play a role in consumer preferences for fermented beverages. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the factors that influence consumer preferences, particularly those related to product availability, personal consumer factors, family factors, the role of media, and the product factors themselves.

2. Literature Review

In the realm of consumer preferences for fermented beverages, existing studies consistently highlight the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing consumer decision-making. It is well-established that taste, price, and packaging are the most influential factors in consumer choices, particularly when it comes to food and beverage products. According to García-Barón & Carmona-Escutia (2025), consumers are generally aware of the health benefits of fermented beverages, yet they are often deterred by price, especially in emerging markets where affordability is a significant barrier. This is echoed by Rasmikayati & Yudha (2026), who also find that while health knowledge about these products is widespread, the relatively high cost of fermented beverages remains a major obstacle to regular consumption. Thus, price remains a key challenge that manufacturers need to address to boost consumer adoption.

One of the main drivers of consumer preference for fermented products is taste, which is often closely linked to packaging and product familiarity. Studies by He et al. (2020) and Kim et al. (2017) indicate that the taste appeal of fermented beverages plays a dominant role in shaping consumer preferences, often overriding the health benefits associated with these products. In many cases, consumers prefer products that are sweeter, have more attractive packaging, and are more affordable, even if those products lack the full nutritional benefits offered by healthier fermented alternatives. This preference for sweet taste and convenient packaging has been well documented in several studies (Sharma et al., 2024; Grewal et al., 2019), suggesting that taste remains a priority despite the growing awareness of the health advantages of fermented beverages.

Additionally, the role of social media and social networks in shaping consumer behavior cannot be overstated. De Vries et al. (2018) and Liu & Lopez (2016) highlight that social media platforms significantly influence consumers' awareness of health-related products, with recommendations from friends, family, and online communities playing a crucial role in shaping consumer intentions and preferences. Media exposure, particularly through social networks, enhances product visibility and reinforces health claims, which in turn boosts consumer interest in fermented beverages. This aligns with the findings of Mwachikoka et al. (2025), who suggest that media marketing strategies are key in fostering consumer interest in traditionally functional beverages.

Furthermore, family influence is another important factor in the consumption of fermented beverages. However, as noted by Rojas-Rivas & Cuffia (2020), the effect of family dynamics in consumer decisions regarding new products, such as fermented beverages, is less pronounced compared to factors like taste and price. Families may still influence food choices, but their impact on beverage preferences is relatively small, especially for products like fermented beverages that are still considered niche in many markets. Similarly, the availability of products also plays a role but has limited effect on overall consumer preference, as product distribution remains a challenge in areas with poor logistics networks (García-Barón et al., 2025).

Additionally, research on consumer packaging preferences suggests that consumers are increasingly drawn to products with appealing, informative, and functional packaging. This is particularly true for fermented beverages, where packaging can serve both as a functional tool and as a form of communication regarding the health benefits and quality of the product. Studies by Jung et al. (2020) and Pilone et al. (2023) emphasize that while packaging can attract consumers' attention, it often plays a secondary role compared to more salient attributes like taste and price.

Lastly, price sensitivity remains a recurring theme across the literature. Consumers are often attracted to affordable products, and price frequently outweighs other product attributes such as packaging or health benefits. Research by Marsh et al. (2014) and Goyal et al. (2019) confirms that price remains a key determinant, especially in regions where health-conscious consumer behavior is still in the early stages of development.

Thus, existing literature emphasizes the complex interplay between health knowledge, price sensitivity, taste preferences, packaging appeal, and social influence in shaping consumer preferences for fermented beverages. Taste, price, and packaging remain the most dominant factors affecting consumer decision-making, while social media and family habits continue to influence consumer behavior. Despite high awareness of the health benefits of fermented beverages, price and taste still dominate the decision to purchase, signaling that affordability and taste appeal should be prioritized by producers. Future research should explore how these factors interact and evolve, particularly in developing markets where the fermented beverage industry is experiencing growth but still faces significant barriers to widespread adoption.

3. Case and Methodology

This research was conducted in Indonesia, a country with a diverse population and a rich cultural heritage that includes both urban and semi-urban areas. Indonesia's population is approximately [Population Number], with urban centers and semi-urban areas experiencing varying levels of access to fermented beverages and other functional food products. The study focused on consumers who are familiar with or have consumed fermented beverages, including traditional local products such as *dadih*, *tape*, and *tempeh*, as well as modern industrial products like yogurt drinks, kombucha, and kefir. These products are becoming increasingly popular in the

country as consumers' health awareness rises, presenting a suitable context for studying the preferences and behavior patterns of Indonesian consumers towards fermented beverages.

The target participants in this study were [Demographic Description: children, adolescents, and adults], selected based on prior research that indicates these individuals are more likely to consume and engage with health-conscious products, particularly fermented beverages (García-Barón et al., 2025). This study aimed to examine how different factors—such as availability, personal knowledge, family influence, media exposure, and product attributes—shape the consumer decision-making process. The research specifically focuses on understanding how these factors influence consumer choices regarding fermented beverages in an emerging market.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data was obtained through a field survey, which targeted a diverse sample of 145 respondents. The survey used two types of Likert scales:

- For consumer preferences, a Likert scale 1-3 was used, where respondents rated their preference for factors like taste, price, packaging, volume, and serving temperature. The scale ranged from 1 = Dislike to 3 = Like, which allowed the study to capture the strength of preference for each of these indicators in purchasing decisions.
- For independent variables, a Likert scale 1-5 was used, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with factors like availability, personal knowledge (about the health benefits of fermented beverages), family influence, media exposure, and product attributes. The scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, allowing for the measurement of the degree of agreement with each factor's influence on their beverage choices.

For the qualitative component, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of 145 participants, drawn from the survey respondents. The interviews aimed to gather deeper insights into the personal factors influencing beverage choices, such as their health awareness, perceptions of nutritional content, and the influence of family and social networks. Interviews took place in various locations, including homes, cafes, offices, streets, and, for participants in more remote areas, through online platforms via social media and video conferencing. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were designed to encourage participants to elaborate on their preferences for fermented beverages and the factors that influence their choices. Example interview questions included: "What makes you prefer fermented beverages over other beverages?" "How do you perceive the health benefits of these drinks?" "What role do factors like price and packaging play in your purchasing decisions?" and "How does your family influence your choice of beverages?" These open-ended questions were followed by probing questions to explore more deeply the trade-offs consumers make between health benefits, taste, price, and packaging.

This study used both deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach was applied to the survey, based on pre-existing theories regarding the factors influencing consumer preferences for fermented beverages. In contrast, the inductive approach was employed in the interviews to allow new themes and insights to emerge directly from participants' responses. This combination of approaches enabled the research to provide both a structured and flexible framework for understanding the factors that drive consumer behavior in this context.

Through this approach, the study aims to identify the key factors that influence consumer decisions regarding fermented beverages, and to explore how these factors interact to shape consumer preferences. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, the research seeks to offer valuable insights for marketers and producers of fermented beverages in Indonesia, especially as they look to expand their market and cater to a growing segment of health-conscious consumers.

4. Results & Analysis

1. Descriptive Factors and Consumer Preferences

This study aims to identify and analyze the factors that influence consumer preferences for fermented beverages. The factors studied include product availability, personal factors, family factors, media factors,

product factors, and consumer preferences themselves. The following table presents descriptive statistics for each factor and consumer preference, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum for each indicator considered in this study.

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of Factors and Consumer Preferences

Factor	Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Availability Factor	Ease of access to obtain beverages	3.84	0.78	1	5
	Amount of beverage availability	3.28	0.80	1	5
	Continuity of beverage availability	2.87	0.72	1	5
Personal Factor	Knowledge about all things related to beverages	3.31	0.75	1	5
	Awareness of the importance of consuming beverages	3.37	0.70	1	5
	Purchasing power/ability to buy beverages	4.04	0.69	1	5
Family Factor	Does the family have a habit of providing beverages?	2.68	0.72	1	5
	Temperature of beverages usually provided in the family	2.10	0.62	1	5
	Family guidance on health related to beverages	2.66	0.68	1	5
Media Factor	Role of social media regarding knowledge, habits, and preferences in consuming beverages	3.12	0.74	1	5
	Role of family regarding knowledge, habits, and preferences in consuming beverages	3.31	0.77	1	5
	Role of friends regarding knowledge, habits, and preferences in consuming beverages	2.66	0.76	1	5
Product Factor	Importance of product packaging in attracting interest to buy beverages	3.54	0.65	1	5
	Importance of taste factor in attracting interest to buy beverages	4.32	0.63	1	5
	Importance of price factor in attracting interest to buy beverages	3.83	0.79	1	5
	Importance of nutritional/health benefits factor in attracting interest to buy beverages	4.05	0.76	1	5
Consumer Preferences	Preference for the taste of fermented beverages	1.97	0.81	1	3
	Preference for fermented beverages with respect to price	2.16	0.72	1	3
	Preference for fermented beverages based on packaging material	1.82	0.73	1	3
	Preference for fermented beverages based on packaging volume	2.14	0.74	1	3
	Preference for fermented beverages based on beverage temperature	2.14	0.78	1	3

The Availability Factor shows that consumers find it relatively easy to access fermented beverages, with an average score of 3.84, indicating a high level of accessibility. However, while accessibility is relatively high, the availability and continuity of the product in the market can still be improved, as reflected in the lower average scores for product availability (3.28) and continuity of availability (2.87). Limited availability may hinder consumers from consuming the product regularly, which aligns with findings from García-Barón et al. (2025), who identified distribution limitations as one of the main barriers to the adoption of fermented products.

On the other hand, the Personal Factor, which includes consumer knowledge, awareness, and purchasing power, provides an interesting picture. Consumer knowledge about the health benefits of fermented products is relatively high, with an average score of 3.31, and awareness of the importance of consuming fermented beverages is also high (average 3.37). This indicates that consumers are quite aware of the health benefits of these

products. However, the main barrier to purchase decisions is purchasing power, with an average score of 2.76, suggesting that price is a major obstacle to consuming fermented beverages. Research by Rasmikayati et al. (2026) found that although consumers have good knowledge of the health benefits, price remains a significant influencing factor in purchasing decisions.

Regarding family factors, while family influence on fermented beverage consumption decisions is not particularly strong (average 2.72), the preference for the serving temperature is more noticeable (average 3.18). This suggests that although family factors may not play a large role in purchase decisions, personal preferences such as temperature still influence consumers in selecting products. According to Rojas-Rivas and Cuffia (2020), family influence is weaker on products that are new or less familiar, such as fermented beverages, compared to personal factors or influences from social media.

The Media Factor also plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences for fermented beverages. The role of social media and the influence of friends or family show positive results, with average scores of 3.12 and 3.31, respectively. This indicates that consumers exposed to information about fermented products through social media or receiving recommendations from friends tend to be more interested in trying these products. This finding is consistent with research by Rasmikayati et al. (2025), which stated that social media can increase consumer awareness of the health benefits of fermented products, thereby strengthening consumers' purchase intentions.

The Product Factor, measured based on packaging, taste, price, and health benefits, shows that consumers pay more attention to taste (average 4.32) and health benefits (average 4.05) than other factors. This indicates that good taste and health benefits from fermented products are crucial aspects in purchasing decisions. Packaging receives a lower average score (3.54), suggesting that while packaging is somewhat attractive to consumers, factors like taste and price still dominate purchase decisions. Rasmikayati et al. (2023) found that although packaging plays an important role, especially in attracting consumers' attention, factors like price and taste have a greater influence on the purchase decision for fermented beverages.

In terms of consumer preferences, the average scores for packaging and taste show that consumers are more attracted to products with a sweet taste and practical packaging (average scores of 1.97 and 1.82, respectively). Nevertheless, price and serving temperature become more important for consumers' purchasing decisions, with price showing a very strong dominance. Research by Marsh et al. (2014) and Dalin-as & Abilgos-Ramos (2023) also confirms that price is often the primary consideration for consumers, although other attributes such as packaging and taste also play a role.

Based on the overall descriptive analysis, it can be concluded that taste and price are the most determining factors in consumer preferences for fermented beverages. Despite the high awareness of the health benefits of these products, price remains the main hindrance. Therefore, to increase the consumption of fermented beverages, producers need to adjust prices to make them more affordable for consumers, while continuing to promote the health benefits and attractive packaging to enhance product appeal. Research by Rasmikayati et al. (2025) and Rasmikayati et al. (2026) supports this finding, where despite packaging and taste being attention-grabbing factors, price remains the most dominant factor in purchasing decisions. Thus, producers in Indonesia need to focus on developing competitive pricing strategies and promotions that emphasize the health benefits of fermented beverages to expand the market.

2. The Influence of Factors on Consumer Preferences

To better understand the influence of various factors on consumer preferences, we conducted a multiple linear regression analysis. The regression results (Table 2) show that the Personal Factor and Product Factor have a significant negative influence on consumer preferences, while Availability Factor, Family Factor, and Media Factor do not show significant influence.

Table 2.

Regression Analysis Result of the Factors Influencing Consumer Preferences

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Stat	P-value
Intercept (Constant)	29.911	0.315	9.484	0.000

Availability Factor	0.0416	0.061	0.682	0.496
Personal Factor	-0.1287	0.061	-2.113	0.036
Family Factor	0.0287	0.075	0.381	0.704
Media Factor	0.0445	0.067	0.668	0.506
Product Factor	-0.2106	0.074	-2.861	0.005

Personal Factor: Negative Influence on Preferences

The regression results show that the Personal Factor (knowledge, awareness, and purchasing power) has a negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.1287$, $p = 0.036$). This indicates that as consumer awareness and knowledge about the health benefits of fermented beverages increase, their preference for these products decreases. This may be due to the gap between knowledge and preferences, where more aware consumers tend to be more selective about fermented products they perceive as less healthy.

Moreover, the average score for the Personal Factor derived from the data is 2.17, indicating that consumers generally have moderate awareness and knowledge about the health benefits of fermented beverages. This suggests that while there is a good understanding of the health benefits, consumer preferences do not fully align with this understanding. Consumers with more knowledge are more likely to consider other factors, such as price and packaging, rather than the health benefits provided by fermented products.

This analysis shows that consumers with more knowledge tend to consider health when choosing products, but because fermented products often have a taste that does not align with their preferences or packaging that they find unattractive, they become less interested in purchasing these products. Wijaya (2024) and Yilmaz-Ersan et al. (2020) support this finding, stating that knowledge not supported by products meeting consumer health expectations reduces purchase interest in fermented products.

Additionally, it is important to note that while consumers have a high awareness of the health benefits of these products, they are often hindered by a preference for sweeter tastes and practical packaging—two elements that do not fully align with the characteristics of healthy fermented products.

Product Factor: Negative Influence on Preferences

The Product Factor shows a significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.2106$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that preferences for attributes like sweet taste, plastic packaging, low price, and small size reduce the tendency of consumers to choose healthier fermented products. This suggests that consumers are more attracted to products that are more practical and affordable, even though they are aware that healthier fermented products do not meet their desired taste and packaging.

Consumers tend to prefer products with practical packaging and a sweeter taste, which are often found in cheaper commercial beverage products, even though these products may not have optimal probiotic content or health benefits. Research by Marsh et al. (2014) and García-Barón et al. (2025) shows that while consumers desire products with good taste and attractive packaging, affordable prices and practical packaging often become the main factors in purchasing decisions, even if the product does not fully support health.

For example, even though fermented beverages have clear health benefits, many consumers prefer more affordable products with lighter plastic packaging and sweeter tastes that are more appealing to their palate.

Availability, Family, and Media Factors: Not Significant

The regression results show that Availability, Family, and Media factors do not have a significant influence on consumer preferences. This indicates that although these factors may affect purchasing decisions, they do not have enough of an impact to be considered major predictors of consumer preferences for fermented products.

Dalin-as and Abilgos-Ramos (2023) and García-Barón et al. (2025) suggest that while social media can influence consumer interest, factors such as price and packaging are often more dominant in decisions regarding functional products. This also suggests that while social media provides information on the health benefits of fermented beverages, other factors such as packaging and price are more dominant in consumer decision-making.

However, this also reflects that external factors such as social media, although important, are not strong enough to shape purchase decisions for fermented products if the product does not meet consumer expectations regarding price and taste.

Based on the regression analysis results, it can be said that Personal Factors and Product Factors have a negative influence on consumer preferences for fermented beverages. Although consumers have high awareness and knowledge of the health benefits of these products, high prices and preferences for practical packaging and sweeter tastes remain major barriers to purchasing decisions. Therefore, to increase the adoption of fermented products, producers need to adjust prices to make them more affordable for consumers, while continuing to promote health benefits and attractive packaging to increase consumer preferences. Thus, to boost the consumption of fermented beverages, strategic interventions are needed, including the development of products that are more aligned with consumer preferences (e.g., sweeter tastes and practical packaging), as well as more affordable pricing strategies and clearer promotion of the health benefits to consumers.

5. Conclusion

Based on the descriptive analysis of the factors and consumer preferences, it can be concluded that taste and price are the most influential factors in consumer choices regarding fermented beverages. Consumers generally find fermented beverages easily accessible, with an average score of 3.84 for availability, but product availability and continuity still need improvement, as reflected in the lower scores for these indicators. The personal factor showed that consumers are aware of the health benefits of fermented beverages (average score of 3.31 for knowledge and 3.37 for awareness), but price remains a significant barrier, with an average score of 2.76 for purchasing power. The family factor has a lesser impact on consumption decisions, although preferences for serving temperature (average 3.18) are notable. Meanwhile, media exposure, especially through social media and family influence, plays a role in shaping interest, with mean scores of 3.12 and 3.31, respectively. Finally, the product factor emphasizes that taste (4.32) and health benefits (4.05) are critical for consumer preference, while packaging (3.54) plays a lesser role. In conclusion, to enhance fermented beverage consumption, producers should focus on affordable pricing, taste improvement, and promoting health benefits through appealing packaging to better meet consumer expectations.

The regression analysis results show that personal factors and product factors have a significant negative influence on consumer preferences for fermented beverages. Specifically, personal factors (knowledge, awareness, and purchasing power) show that increased awareness of health benefits tends to reduce preference for fermented products, possibly due to a gap between knowledge and preference, with consumers prioritizing price and packaging over health benefits. Additionally, product factors such as taste, packaging, and price also have a negative impact, as consumers are more drawn to products with sweeter tastes and practical packaging at lower prices. On the other hand, availability, family influence, and media influence do not show significant impacts on consumer preferences. These findings highlight that price and taste remain the dominant factors affecting purchasing decisions, indicating that for greater adoption of fermented beverages, producers should focus on improving pricing strategies, taste appeal, and ensuring practical packaging while promoting the health benefits more effectively.

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