

SOY SAUCE IN SUNDANESE FAMILY CUISINE IN RURAL AREAS

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Abstract This study discusses sweet soy sauce in Sundanese family cuisine in rural areas, focusing on its diverse uses, gastronomic preferences, and its place in the culinary traditions of Cikembang Village. This study uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, with quantitative methods helping to determine the frequency of use, while interviews and observations provide in-depth information. The results of the study show that sweet soy sauce is widely used in foods prepared using wet heat and semi-dry techniques. The foods prepared are not only everyday dishes but also foods that are only available at certain times, such as celebrations and New Year. The preference for sweet soy sauce among Sundanese families is influenced by geography, availability, price, size, and culture. Meanwhile, for culinary businesses, the preferences are influenced by price and size.

Keywords:

Soy Sauce, Gastronomy, Food Preferences, Rural Areas, Sundanese Cuisine

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1. Introduction

Condiments play an important role as natural elements that enhance flavor, color, texture, aroma, and reflect the identity of each culture's food (Chavasit & Photi, 2018; Farrell, 1998; Dini & Laneri, 2021; Mei et al., 2022; Pearson & Gillett, 1996; Qiu et al., 2022; García-Casal et al., 2016; Śmiechowska et al., 2021; Boelens, 2017). The amount of condiment used varies, as they are used not only to enhance flavor but also for health benefits (Dini & Laneri, 2021). The differences and combinations of condiments chosen reflect individual preferences, diversity of tastes, and ways of preparing food in each culture (Spence, 2018; Mei et al., 2022). Culturally, the role of condiments is often associated with the meaning of certain rituals or celebrations, eating patterns, and other cultural narratives that strengthen collective identity (Seubsman et al., 2009; Katz, 2012). Gastronomically, condiments play an important role in enhancing the sensory experience and attracting gastronomic tourism by showcasing the uniqueness of local condiments (Hutkins, 2006; Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016). Some condiments use fermentation techniques in their production process, which depend on local ingredients and traditional techniques. In addition, condiments come in several forms, such as liquid, semi-solid, and solid (Qiu et al., 2022; Hui & Evranuz, 2016; Akpi et al., 2020; LeGrand et al., 2020; Spence, 2018; Dabiré et al., 2022).

Condiments play a profound cultural role as symbols of cultural identity, including in Asia. Condiments as cultural symbols reflect the identity, history, and distinctive tastes of a community. In addition, condiments serve as markers of the authenticity of a region's cuisine and illustrate how that community understand the flavors and social values of food (Aster et al., 2023). The production of condiments relies not only on local knowledge of recipes passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition and cooking practices, but also on basic ingredients adapted to the environment and cuisine that have been part of the diet for centuries (Anggadhania et al., 2023; Surya & Tedjakusuma, 2022; Surya & Lee, 2022). Examples in Asia include *kimchi* and *jang* in Korean cuisine, *sawsawan*, *nuoc mam*, and *bagoong* in Filipino cuisine, *belacan* and *buku* in Malaysian cuisine, *nam pla* in Thai cuisine, and *wasabi* and *katsuobushi* in Japanese cuisine (Kim et al., 2023; Patra et al., 2016; J. Y. Jung et al., 2011; Aster et al., 2023; Hui & Ehranuz, 2016; Narzary et al., 2021; Sultana & Savage, 2008; Mitou et al., 2008). Examples of Indonesian condiments include *tempoyak*, *bekasam*, *terasi*, *sambal*, and *kecap* (Anggadhania et al., 2023; Setiarto & Herlina, 2024; Herlina & Setiarto, 2024; Surya & Tedjakusuma, 2022; Lioe & Apriyantono, 2012). Another important condiment in Asia is soy sauce.

Soy sauce is a condiment originating in China that is widely used in Asian cuisine as a flavoring, dipping sauce, or accompaniment to dishes (Diez-Simon et al., 2020). Soy sauce spread through trade and cultural exchange to Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia (O'toole, 1997). The umami flavor produced from the fermentation process is the main characteristic of soy sauce that makes it popular (Lioe et al., 2010). The variations of soy sauce in Asia based on region reflect cultural diversity with various names, such as *shoyu* from Japan, *jiangyou* from China, *kecap* from Indonesia, and *tayo* from the Philippines (Ji et al., 2024; O'toole, 1997). Sweet soy sauce is a typical Indonesian condiment that is also made from black soybeans (Apriyantono et al., 1999; Lioe et al., 2003; Judoamidjojo et al., 1985). In the production of sweet soy sauce, palm sugar is added, resulting in a thicker, sweeter, and darker soy sauce. Meanwhile, salty soy sauce is saltier, lighter in color, and more liquid due to the addition of more salt (Shurtleff & Aoyagi, 2012). The basic ingredients and tools used to make sweet soy sauce vary in different regions of Indonesia (Fitri Astuti & Wardani, 2016; Widiantara et al., 2018; Suri et al., n.d.; Hasanela et al., 2022; Astuti et al., 2012; Prayoga & Wijaya, 2019). In addition, consumer preferences in purchasing sweet soy sauce also vary, such as product attributes including brand, price, packaging, and quality. Quality includes taste and aroma. In addition, product availability, such as ease of finding and accessibility, is also very influential due to differences in the geographical location of consumers (Rachmawati & Muflikhati, 2017; Nursamawati et al., 2022; Wahdah et al., 2020).

It is important to understand consumer behavior based on geographical location, such as in cities and villages. Consumers in cities tend to pay more attention to brands and packaging because of greater exposure to advertising and access to marketing information, while consumers in villages focus more on price and availability due to limited access and lower purchasing power (Rachmawati & Muflikhati, 2017). Cikembang Village is a mountainous area that was formerly a plantation, with the majority of its residents originating from other Sundanese regions (Mulyanto et al., 2021), which may reflect the diversity of Sundanese culinary origins. Previous studies have discussed Sundanese cuisine, such as *lalapan* and *sambal* (Iskandar et al., 2023; Rahmah & Ansori, 2023; Surya & Tedjakusuma, 2022). In this paper, the author not only focuses on the perception and use of sweet soy sauce as a condiment in Sundanese culinary traditions, but also on the role and significance of sweet soy sauce in Sundanese culinary culture. The village of Cikembang is one area that may represent the culinary diversity of the Sundanese people in a former colonial plantation area.

2. Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Data collection techniques use several methods, namely observation, market stall surveys, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to determine market activities and the practice of using sweet soy sauce on food by traders and simple food stalls. Market stall surveys were conducted at Pasar Baru Cibeureum to determine the types of sweet soy sauce sold, knowledge about taste and texture, distribution, and prices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with housewives, vendors, cooks, and managers of simple food stalls to explore their understanding of how to process sweet soy sauce, the dishes commonly cooked, and their preferences for sweet soy sauce. Documentation was carried out to record the types of sweet soy sauce sold and the foods that use sweet soy sauce.

Data collection was conducted in December 2024 and April 2025 using accidental sampling techniques for housewife informants, where informants were selected randomly based on ease of access and availability, and supplemented with in-depth interviews to obtain detailed information about how to cook certain dishes and dishes available at certain times. A total of 18 housewives and cooks were interviewed, and a survey was conducted at 13 market stalls selling sweet soy sauce.

The collected data were analyzed and presented in tables and graphs. The data were then calculated based on Relative Frequency of Citations (RFC) to measure the frequency of sweet soy sauce usage based on how often it was mentioned by informants, indicating its importance in society (Omotayo et al., 2020) using the following formula:

$$RFC = \frac{FC}{N}$$

Where FC is the number of informants who mentioned the use of sweet soy sauce for certain dishes and the types of sweet soy sauce sold, and N is the number of informants interviewed (Whitney, 2019). The calculated data was then narrated.

This study was conducted in Cikembang Village, Kertasari Subdistrict, Bandung Regency, precisely at coordinates 7°12'38.5"S and 107°41'20.1"E, covering an area of approximately 15 hectares. Based on its topography, most of the Kertasari District consists of mountains or hills with an altitude above sea level ranging from 1,200 m to 1,800 m. In addition, it is part of the upper Citarum River Basin (DAS). This village was established in 1983, so it can be said to be quite stable because it has existed for a relatively long time. As a result, the village community tends to be homogeneous, especially since it is a plantation village generally inhabited by groups of residents with similar backgrounds. In the southern part of the village, there are two tea plantation relics from the colonial era. The Santosa tea plantation was founded by J.H.W. Rusch in 1894 and is located about 10 km from the village. Meanwhile, the Kertasarie tea factory, which is only 4.5 km from the village, was founded in 1906 by the British company Harrison and Crossfield Plc.

This area has a settlement pattern and land use that varies in its utilization. The settlement pattern in Cikembang Village is radial or scattered because it follows the contours of the land, and the majority of the other areas of the village are plantation areas. Many houses in this village are semi-permanent structures, some with walls made of woven bamboo called *bilik*, a characteristic feature of traditional Sundanese houses. To increase the durability of the *bilik* and prevent it from rotting quickly, it is usually coated with a white lime solution. In addition, there are also public toilets or bathrooms located around the residential areas. The land use in Cikembang Village is mostly for plantations with an area of 998.0000 (Ha), public facilities 209.6720 (Ha), and

residential areas covering 20.0000 (Ha). In addition to the area being surrounded by colonial-era tea plantations, much of the land has been converted to vegetable farming, such as cabbage, carrots, potatoes, spring onions, and other crops. Cikembang Village is one of the agricultural producing villages whose products are distributed to the Bandung area and its surroundings, and to this day, most of the villagers work as farmers and farm laborers. For daily necessities, the community obtains basic materials from gardens, markets, and grocery stores.

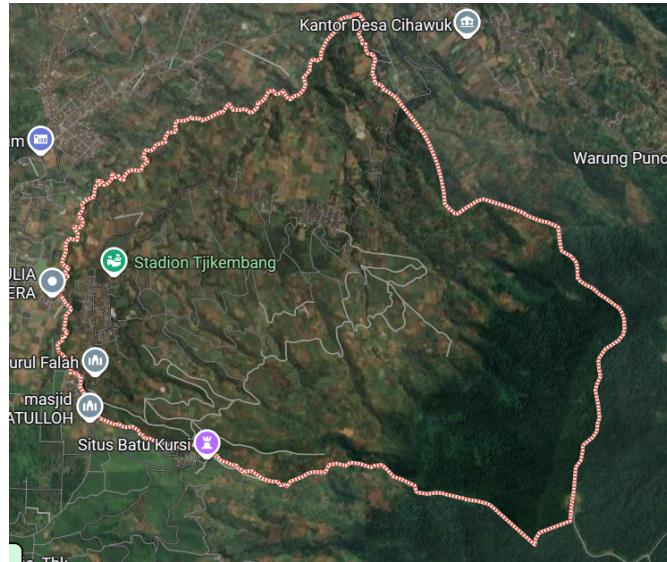


Figure 1. Map of Cikembang Village

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Dishes Using Sweet Soy Sauce

Sweet soy sauce has become a staple condiment in various Indonesian dishes, with its sweet and savory taste, dark brown color, and thick texture being its most appealing characteristics (Judoamidjojo et al., 1985). There are 36 dishes mentioned by housewives and cooks during fieldwork. All household chores, including cooking, are done by the housewives themselves. Informants often deliberately cook easy and quick dishes for breakfast, such as fried eggs or fried rice. Some dishes are not only served daily but also during special occasions or New Year's celebrations. In this article, celebrations refer to wedding receptions. The local community has a broad understanding of various dishes that have been passed down from generation to generation, based on the resources available in the surrounding environment (Iskandar et al., 2023). The use of sweet soy sauce in everyday dishes and at certain social or ritual events shows that food is part of social practices that strengthen bonds within the community (Noriza et al., 2012).

Food processing techniques are divided into three techniques, namely *moist heat cooking*, *dry heat cooking*, and *fat heat cooking*. *Moist heat cooking* is done using liquids such as water, broth, milk, coconut milk, or hot steam. This technique includes boiling, *simmering* (heating liquid below boiling point), blanching (briefly boiling ingredients in boiling water), *poaching* (cooking ingredients at low temperatures), *steaming* (cooking using steam from boiling water), *braising* (a combination of dry and moist heat by first roasting and then cooking slowly with a little liquid), and *stewing* (simmering ingredients in a seasoned liquid over medium heat for a long time). Meanwhile, *dry heat cooking* techniques include *baking* (cooking using dry heat such as an oven), *roasting* (cooking at high temperatures using dry heat), and *grilling* (placing food directly over a heat source). Another term used by the Sundanese people for this technique is *dibeuleum* or

meuleum, which is burning ingredients directly over a fire or embers, usually for fish caught from rivers or ponds. There is also a technique called *dipanggang* or *manggang*, where the ingredients are placed close to the fire or embers but still at a distance from the heat source.

In addition, there is semi-dry processing (*fat heat cooking*) which includes *sauteing*, *shallow frying* (frying with a little oil without submerging the entire ingredient), *stir frying* (cooking over high heat using a little oil while stirring continuously), and *deep frying* (frying by submerging the entire ingredient in oil). Another name for this technique among the Sundanese is *goreng* or *ngagoreng*, which is a cooking method using hot oil. Another technique is *dikérécék*, which is a cooking method of frying until half cooked, then mixing with a little water and adding seasonings (Karimah et al., 2022; Setyaningsih et al., 2024). There are also foods that do not undergo a heating process or are raw and can be consumed fresh.

Table 1. A variety of dishes that use sweet soy sauce

Dish Name	Type of Dish	Cooking Technique	Availability	Main Ingredients	Use of Soy Sauce	RFC
Soy Sauce Sambal	Side Dishes	Raw	Daily	Sweet soy sauce, chili peppers	Dipped	0.13
Fish stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Fish, sweet soy sauce, bay leaves	Cooked	0.05
Tofu stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Tofu, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.05
Beef stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Beef, sweet soy sauce, candlenuts, cloves,	Cooked	0.13
Egg stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Eggs, sweet soy sauce, candlenuts, cloves	Cooked	0.02
Jengkol stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Jengkol, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic, cloves	Cooked	0.05
Beef satay	Main dish	Wet heat, dry heat	Eid al-Fitr, New Year	Beef, sweet soy sauce, salt, chili peppers	Cooked	0.05
Chicken satay	Main dish	Dry heat	Celebrations, New Year	Chicken meat, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.11
Soy sauce chicken	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Chicken meat, sweet soy sauce, ginger, bay leaves	Cooked	0.16
Chicken liver with soy sauce seasoning	Main dish	Hot and wet, semi-dry	Daily	Liver, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.02
Chicken feet with	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Chicken, sweet soy sauce, shallots,	Cooked	0.02

soy sauce seasoning				garlic		
Fried tempeh	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Tempeh, sweet soy sauce, chili peppers	Cooked	0.16
Fried tofu	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Tofu, sweet soy sauce, chili peppers	Cooked	0.02
Stir-fried chili	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Chili peppers, shallots, garlic, sweet soy sauce, sugar	Cooked	0.08
Potato stir-fry	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Potatoes, red onions, garlic, sweet soy sauce	Cooked	0.05
-style chili noodles	-based main dish	Hot wet, semi-dry	Daily	Rice noodles, chili peppers, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.13
Stir-fried vegetables	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Vegetables (to taste), salt, sugar, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.02
Fish	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily, celebration s	Carp, sweet soy sauce, turmeric, ginger, galangal, lemongrass, coriander	Cooked	0.11
Grilled chicken	Main dish	Wet heat, dry heat	Celebration s, New Year	Chicken meat, marinade seasoning, sweet soy sauce, margarine	Cooked	0.05
Grilled fish	Main course	Dry heat	New Year	Fish, marinade, sweet soy sauce, lime	Cooked	0.05
Bacem tempe	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Tempeh, shallots, garlic, candlenuts,	Cooked	0.16
Bacem- spiced meat	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Beef, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic, galangal, brown sugar, coconut water	Cooked	0.02
Jengkol stew	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Daily	Jengkol chili, spring onion, roasted coconut, sweet soy sauce	Cooked	0.02
Beef layers	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Beef, onion, shallot, garlic, coconut milk,	Cooked	0.05

				sweet soy sauce, oyster sauce		
Shredded chicken	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Chicken meat, candlenuts, galangal, sweet soy sauce, tomato sauce, chili sauce, galangal, tomatoes	Cooked	0.05
Chicken cimplung	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Chicken meat, garlic, shallots, galangal, tomatoes, sweet soy sauce, brown sugar, coconut milk	Cooked	0.02
Fried eggs	Main dish	Semi-dry	Daily	Eggs, sweet soy sauce	Cooked /side dish	0.38
Fried noodles	Main dish	Hot and wet, semi-dry	Daily	Noodles, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic	Cooked	0.19
Chicken porridge	Main dish	Hot and wet	Daily	Porridge, shredded chicken, broth seasoning	Side dishes	0.05
Gepuk	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Eid al-Fitr	Beef, coconut, coriander, sweet soy sauce, pepper, brown sugar, white sugar, bay leaves, bouillon powder	Cooked	0.08
Fried rice	Main dish	Hot and wet, semi-dry	Daily	White rice, sweet soy sauce, shallots, garlic, oil	Cooked	0.19
Meatballs	Main dish	Hot and wet	Daily	Meatballs, broth, fried onions	Side dishes	0.11
Teriyaki	Main dish	Wet heat, semi-dry	Celebration	Beef, teriyaki sauce, sesame seeds, bell peppers, red onions, garlic, galangal	Cooked	0.02
-marinated chicken	-style chicken main dish	Hot wet	Daily	Chicken meat, red onion, garlic, coriander, turmeric	Cooked	0.02
Fried tofu	Main dish	Semi-dry	Daily	Yellow tofu, sweet soy sauce	Dipped	0.19
Fried tempeh	Main dish	Semi-dry	Daily	Tempeh, sweet soy sauce, salt	Dipped	0.05

There are various dishes that use sweet soy sauce with a variety of preparations and ways of using sweet soy sauce in them. The dish most often mentioned by informants is fried eggs, at 0.38%, due to the ease of cooking and its popularity with children. Soy sauce is used for fried eggs by cooking it or as a condiment when the food is already cooked. Meanwhile, the dishes least mentioned by informants were teriyaki, ayam cimplung (chicken with coconut milk), ayam ungkep (chicken cooked in coconut milk), kerecek jengkol (jengkol stir-fry), daging bumbu bacem (spiced meat), tahu orek (fried tofu), tumis sayur (stir-fried vegetables), ceker bumbu kecap (chicken feet with soy sauce), ati ampela bumbu kecap (chicken liver with soy sauce), and semur telur (egg stew). The availability of these rarely mentioned dishes also varies; some are cooked daily, for celebrations, or as menu items at simple eateries. The food processing techniques used are also not limited to one method for these dishes. Most of these foods undergo a stir-frying process.



Figure 2. Dishes that use sweet soy sauce

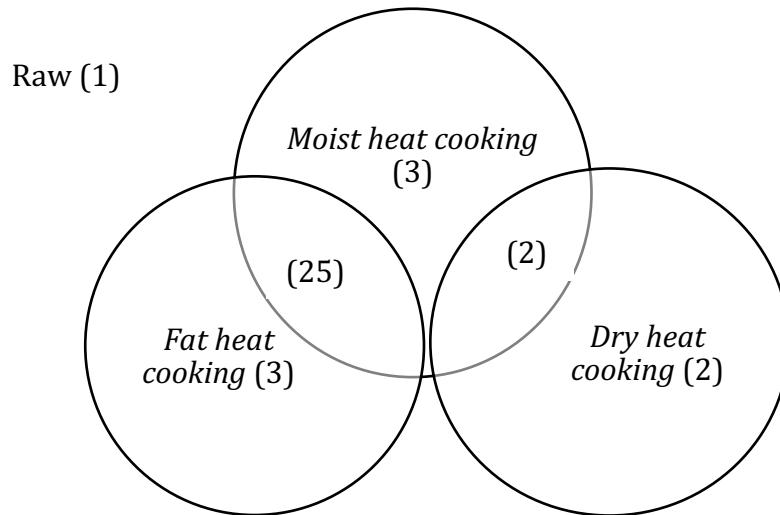


Figure 3. Food processing techniques

The dominant dishes are cooked using the technique of sautéing spices, which produces a fragrant aroma and brings out the distinctive flavors of the spices used (Simanullang, 2023). The Sundanese people in villages eat three meals a day, with ingredients sourced from biological or animal sources. Some of these plant-based or animal- s have become symbols of food and culture in the past, influencing customs and impacting the consumption patterns and traditions of certain communities (Svanberg & Ståhlberg, 2024).In addition, the menu varies according to specific occasions, such as celebrations, New Year, and religious holidays such as Eid al-Adha or Eid al-Fitr. In the food preparation process, traditional knowledge is used and combined with the diversity of local ingredients to create uniqueness in local gastronomy. Cooking skills—which also include ingredient selection, preparation, presentation, and involvement in eating—can be categorized as artistic activities. This is because some communities strive to make the cooking process a form of pure presentation. In some cases, food is not only made for consumption but also for ritual purposes (Hegarty & Barry O'mahony, 2001).Cooking skills are interdisciplinary and dynamic because they reflect human experience (Neill et al., 2017).There are three components of the culinary triangle that categorize food and are almost the same in all cultures, namely raw, cooked, and fermented. These three components represent the ways in which humans classify, transform, and create culture in their interactions with food. Food that undergoes the cooking process is transformed through cultural means, namely containers, which are the products of culture (Levi-Strauss & Weightman, 1964).

3.2 Sweet Soy Sauce Gastronomic Preferences in Sundanese Families

Sweet soy sauce is made through a fermentation process, which not only creates a unique texture and flavor but also makes it a distinctive product. Many consumers are loyal to certain brands based on their family's culinary experiences or traditions. There are six types of sweet soy sauce sold by 13 stalls in the market in different packaging and sizes. Informants mostly use Bango brand sweet soy sauce for everyday dishes, with ABC being the second most mentioned brand. The reason for choosing these two brands is that they have been consuming them for a long time . In addition, several other considerations made before purchasing sweet soy sauce by

informants are price, taste, color, and availability. For kitchen needs, such as cooking spices and other ingredients, informants often shop at Pasar Baru Cibeureum, which is 3.4 km away and takes approximately 10 minutes by motorcycle. Sweet soy sauce is a cooking spice or condiment that informants frequently purchase. Several housewife informants explained that they often buy sweet soy sauce in *sachets* or *refill* packs. Some informants buy sweet soy sauce at grocery stores, purchasing it only when needed and not stocking up.

People's preference for sweet soy sauce is rooted in local culinary values, habits, and traditions. Before discovering sweet soy sauce, the Sundanese and other communities had already knew sweet flavors in their cuisine from other sources, such as brown sugar or others. The taste for sweetness is not the result of market influence but is maintained and developed by local generations. From interviews with household informants, it is also known that certain brands of sweet soy sauce are considered suitable for certain dishes, reflecting sensory preferences and cooking experience as the basis for selection. Sweet soy sauce not only serves as a condiment to enhance flavor, but is also an important part of social moments, such as celebrations, New Year celebrations, and traditional cooking. This shows that the use of sweet soy sauce is related to family rituals and togetherness, not just mass consumption from the market. Widely distributed national brands such as Bango or ABC, which were often mentioned by informants, act as facilitators for existing taste preferences. In other word, the market does not create preferences but adapts to established local tastes.

Table 2. Types of sweet soy sauce

Types of Sweet Soy Sauce	Packaging & Price	Factory Address	Classification	Texture	RFC
ABC	15ml (sachet) Rp5,000/pack, Rp5,500/pack 60ml (refill) Rp2,000	PT Heinz ABC Indonesia, Pasuruan 67154	Sweet	Liquid, sweet taste appears when it first touches the tongue and savory afterwards. Sweetness dominates the mouth	0.69
Bango	18ml (sachet) Rp11,000/pack 280ml (refill) Rp10,000 210ml (refill) IDR 10,000 720ml (refill) IDR 28,000	PT Unilever Indonesia Tbk Cikarang Bekasi 17520	Sweet	Not too thick. The sweet, salty, and savory flavors are well-balanced. The color is darker.	0.76
Cap Anggrek	325ml (refill) IDR 7,500 IDR 8,000	Kencana Soy Sauce Factory, Cimahi, West Java	Medium Sweet	Thick, with a subtle sweetness. No savory taste.	0.38
Sarasa	225ml (refill) Rp5,500	CV TINTIN, Garut 44191	Sweet	Very thick and dark in color. Dominantly bitter	0.30

		Rp5,000		taste. Sweet and savory flavors are only slightly noticeable.	
		450ml (refill) IDR 9,000			
HD	175ml (refill) Rp7,000 Rp8,000	CV TINTIN, Garut 44191	Sweet	Liquid consistency. The sweetness is quite strong. There is a slight bitter aftertaste.	0.23
	450ml (refill) Rp12,000				
Sedaap	60ml (refill) Rp2,000	PT Karunia Alam Segar Gresik 61151	Sweet	Tends to be thick. The first taste is savory, followed by sweetness. The sweetness and savoriness are well balanced.	0.15



Figure 4. Types of sweet soy sauce sold at Pasar Baru Cibeureum

The most widely sold type of sweet soy sauce is Bango, while the least sold is Sedaap. Distribution is mostly carried out by salespeople or vendors who come to market stalls on a specific schedule or according to availability at the stalls. At certain times, such as during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, demand for sweet soy sauce increases, causing supplies at the stalls to run out quickly. The use of sweet soy sauce at that time increases because several dishes served on that holiday use a lot of sweet soy sauce. However, there is one stall that buys its supplies by going directly to a larger market, namely Maruyung Market. The owner shops for stall supplies, including sweet soy sauce, once a week by motorcycle. Local brands of sweet soy sauce, such as Sarasa, HD, and Cap Anggrek, are widely used for trading purposes, such as batagor, tofu

meatballs, and others. The considerations for choosing local sweet soy sauce for trading are price and size. Cheap prices and large sizes. The local soy sauce available at Pasar Baru Cibeureum comes from areas relatively close to Cikembang Village, indicating that location influences product distribution. The relatively short distance and easy access facilitate distribution, reduce transportation costs, and speed up distribution (Rachmawati & Muflikhati, 2017). The selection of sweet soy sauce by residents in Cikembang Village is influenced by brand, price, and availability. Additionally, family traditions of using a specific brand of sweet soy sauce also play a role in purchasing decisions.

Based on the above findings, the choice of sweet soy sauce as an important condiment in the culinary preferences of the people of Cikembang Village is determined by several factors, namely culture, geography, availability, and economics, which shape the consumption patterns of the community. In line with several other studies on consumer preferences in condiment purchases, these factors include geographical location, quality including taste, product attributes including brand, price, and packaging (Rachmawati & Muflikhati, 2017; Nursamawati et al., 2022). The cultural aspect in people's daily lives, the meaning of food is described through eating practices, namely how to choose, shop, cook, eat, and behave, reflecting the cultural and social meaning of food that is closely related to the identity and social status of individuals or groups (Fjellström & Sydner, 2017; Scheiber & Mitchell, 2010). Small differences in meal preparation reflect the formation of identity and characteristics between community groups (Duke, 2023). The choice of sweet soy sauce is also influenced by habits passed down from parents who have already used a certain type, with *foodways* or eating habits becoming a link from generation to generation (Noriza et al., 2012; Duke, 2023; Cheung & Chee-Beng, 2007). In this context, preferences for specific types of sweet soy sauce go beyond mere taste and represent the cross-generational inheritance of culinary traditions. Practices passed down from parents – including a preference for the Bango brand, which is the choice of housewives, or certain flavor characteristics – help preserve cultural continuity and identity within families and local communities. As a result, culinary identity is formed through consistent patterns of choosing, preparing, and sharing food, which together foster a sense of community within a community.

4. Conclusion

The use of sweet soy sauce in Sundanese family dishes in rural areas varies greatly and still utilizes ingredients from natural resources. The dishes are not only made for daily needs, but also for special occasions such as wedding receptions or New Year celebrations. The most commonly used processing techniques are wet heat and semi-dry heat. Factors such as price, packaging, and size are the main considerations for informants when purchasing sweet soy sauce. In addition, the taste and color of sweet soy sauce are also important aspects in choosing sweet soy sauce for household needs.

People's habit of using certain brands also influences informants' preference not to switch to other brands. Bango sweet soy sauce is the most widely sold brand in the market, while Sedaap sweet soy sauce is the least sold. Bango sweet soy sauce is the most commonly found soy sauce in Pasar Baru Cibeureum, while local sweet soy sauce is more widely used in culinary businesses because it is cheaper and comes in larger sizes. Price is an important factor in culinary businesses. It can be concluded that for culinary business owners, price is more important, while for rural communities or for household needs, taste is more important.

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