

The Iban Community's Perception: The Taste, Ingredients, and Cooking Methods of Ibanese Traditional Chicken Dish

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Abstract

Traditional food is an integral part of the culture, identity, and heritage of every nation or ethnic group worldwide. In Malaysia, the diverse community has enriched the country's heritage cuisine, showcasing unique cooking methods and food presentations. However, Manuk Pansuh, an Ibanese traditional chicken dish, is increasingly being forgotten, and the Iban community is losing knowledge of its preparation. Typically enjoyed during the Gawai Dayak festival, Manuk Pansuh is now available in restaurants but fails to meet public demand. This study aims to understand the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh. The design of this study is a survey study using a quantitative approach. Data was collected from 50 Iban respondents through questionnaires. The findings revealed that the Iban community holds high regard for the ingredients and cooking methods of Manuk Pansuh. However, their perception of its taste is moderate. In conclusion, there is a need for the Iban community to preserve and enhance their traditional cuisine. The Iban community needs to take proactive steps to preserve and enhance their traditional cuisine, particularly Manuk Pansuh to remain a cherished and enduring part of their cultural heritage, even in the era of modernization.

1. Introduction

One of the most important needs in human daily life is food. Food is an important source for the growth process, building tissue cells in the human body, mental well-being, and preventing disease (Wright et al., 2021). In addition, food is a material that can be digested consisting of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, water, vitamins, or minerals that can be eaten or drunk by humans to get nutrients. Food has its value because it can be a source of national income in terms of the food economy. Each country has its own product or food value that plays an important role in society (Reddy & van Dam, 2020; Chen & Antonelli, 2020; Ranta & Ichijo, 2022).

Manuk Pansuh is a famous food icon among the Dayak people found in Sarawak, namely the Iban, Bidayuh, and Orang Ulu. According to Rusli (2011), Manuk Pansuh or the name of this dish in the Iban language is 'Manuk Pansuh' is a dish prepared by cooking chicken meat in bamboo. 'Manuk' means Chicken while 'Pansuh' means cooking in bamboo over an open fire. The origin of Manuk Pansuh is unknown but the Dayak people from West Borneo always prepare this obligatory dish during festivals. Usually served during the Dayak Gawai Festival means a thanksgiving festival to mark the rice harvest and is also food that must be prepared and eaten.

Manuk Pansuh is Sarawak's traditional Iban food which is made by cooking chicken in bamboo. Traditional food is passed down from generation to generation (Mastrangelo et al., 2019) and is a symbol of the identity of the Iban community (Muhamad et al., 2023; Chong et al., 2023). In addition, Manuk Pansuh is also unique and only found in Sarawak. Manuk Pansuh is made by cooking chicken in bamboo tubes. Ingredients for this recipe include chicken, water, lemongrass, tapioca leaves, *bungking* leaves, *tepus* shoots, garlic, shallots, and ginger. In addition,

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seasoning and salt are added to improve the flavour. In the current era of modernization, Manuk Pansuh is increasingly being forgotten and the Iban community now lacks the knowledge to prepare. This Ibanese dish is widely available during the Gawai Dayak festival season only (Sageng et al., 2024), there are also traditional food stores providing Manuk Pansuh but very limited. In addition, natural ingredients for this traditional dish are very difficult to obtain. Some Ibanese especially the young generation today are less skilled at cooking Manuk Pansuh using the traditional cooking practices of using bamboo tubes (Wan Sageng et al., 2020). Besides that, people nowadays work so much that they don't have the opportunity to prepare traditional food. Therefore, we want to study the perception of the Iban community towards the taste, ingredients, and cooking methods of Manuk Pansuh. This study was conducted to identify the perception of the Iban community towards the taste, importance, and cooking method of traditional Sarawak food namely Manuk Pansuh.

2. Methodology

The methodology section describes all the necessary information that is required to obtain the results of the study. It consists of Research Design, Research Procedure, and Research Instrument. The design of this study is a survey using a quantitative approach. This descriptive survey study uses a quantitative approach, which is to use a questionnaire distributed by the researcher to the respondents. Population is the total number of people or residents in a place or area. Population is one of the large groups of people that have been focused on in studies (Sekaran, 2000). Based on Tuai Rumah Empaga, Rumah Panjang Nanga Bong (2022), the number of residents of the Iban community in Rumah Panjang Nanga Bong is 50 people. The researcher chose the Iban village area at Rumah Panjang Nanga Bong because Manuk Pansuh is the traditional food of the ancestors of the Iban community. A sample is a group of units smaller than a population that is used to determine the truth about that population (Lakens, 2022; Casteel & Bridier, 2021).

A sample is a representative portion or one item of a larger whole group especially when presented for inspection or shown as evidence of quality. A sample is also a statistical population whose characteristics are studied to obtain information about the whole (Andrade, 2021). In this study, the study population was used as a study sample. This study was conducted at Rumah Panjang Nanga Bong, Ulu Paku, Betong, Sarawak is known as 'Sungai Bong'. This location is an area of the longhouse village of the Iban community in the sub-district of Spaoh, Betong Division (Betong Division Administration, 2022). This study was conducted at Rumah Panjang Nanga Bong, Ulu Paku, Betong Sarawak. Nanga Bong has 15 rooms or houses. Nanga Bong was chosen as the focus of the actual study location because the population is the majority of the Iban community.

2.1 Research Instrument

This study used a questionnaire as an instrument to obtain information and data from the respondents accurately and authentically. In this study, the questionnaire consisted of 4 sections and contained 24 items. Likert scale is used to obtain data. According to Jamieson (2004), the Likert scale allows respondents to make choices accurately and has a high-reliability value based on the number of respondents. The set of questions produced on the questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale as shown in Table 3.2. This scale shows that scores (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) not sure, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was also validated, and the pilot study was conducted to determine the feasibility or reasonableness before use in actual data collection. Validity is an instrument that evaluates what should be evaluated (Creswell, 2015). The importance of the validity of the instrument is to avoid any confusion that will arise and to ensure that the questionnaire items are easily understood by the respondents.

Table 1 Five-point Likert scale (Runyon & Andrey, 1988)

Scale	Score
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Not sure	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

2.2 Data Analysis Methods

In this study, the researcher used frequency, percentage, mean score, and standard deviation to identify the Iban community's perception of the taste, ingredients, and cooking methods of Manuk Pansuh. The mean score interpretation to interpret the data obtained. According to Riduwan (2012), the average mean score is divided into four levels, namely the less suitable level (1.00-1.50), low level (1.51-2.50), medium level (2.51-3.50) and high level (3.51-4.00).

3. Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section presents data and analysis of the study. Data analysis from the questionnaire was done using tests that show frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

3.1 Respondent Demographics

The result of the study shows that the Iban community's demography. Table 2 shows the demographic analysis of respondents by frequency and percentage based on gender and age.

Table 2 Demographics of respondents

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Men	22	44
	Women	28	56
	Total	50	100
Age	49 years old and below	9	18
	50 - 59 years old	13	26
	60 - 69 years old	11	22
	70 - 79 years old	10	20
	80 years old and above	7	14
	Total	50	100

This study involved 50 respondents consisting of 44% (22 people) male respondents while 56% (28 people) female respondents. From this analysis, the researcher can make a general impression that the number of female respondents is the majority, and more than the male respondents as shown in Table 2. Next, the respondent's age ranged from 49 to 80 years old and above. There are 9 (18%) respondents who are aged 49 years and below. In addition, there are 13 (26%) respondents from the age group of 50 to 59 years. Next, there are 11 (22%) respondents consisting of from the age group of 60 to 69 years. There are 10 people (20%) respondents who are aged 70 to 79 years. Finally, there are 7 (14%) respondents who are aged 80 years and above. The age group of 50 to 59 years recorded the number of frequency and the highest percentage.

3.2 Perception Towards Taste of Manuk Pansuh

Table 3 shows an analysis of the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh. The results of the study show that item B2 (Manuk Pansuh has a sweet taste) recorded a mean score of 3.58 (SD= 0.64) which is the highest mean score. Next, the second highest mean score is item B3 (Manuk Pansuh has a bitter taste) with a mean score of 3.54 (SD= 0.61). Item B1 (Manuk Pansuh has a spicy taste) recorded a mean score of 3.30 (SD= 1.11). The lowest mean score is on Item B4 (Manuk Pansuh has a sour taste) mean score is 2.68 (SD= 1.24). Finally, the average mean score for the perception of Manuk Pansuh taste is 3.28 which is moderate. The findings of the study show that the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh's taste is at a moderate level. The findings of this study are in line with the study of Nawi (2014) who stated that each method and technique used in the preparation of traditional food is different because it can affect the taste of the traditional food. The taste of food is a combination of flavors resulting from natural ingredients and is the main factor that determines the quality and taste of food. This study is also in line with the findings of Djordjevic (2004) and Ibrahim (2018) state that food identity information can increase the perception of the taste of food. Intensity has been the focus of studies that examine food related to taste perception.

Table 3 Perception analysis of the taste of Manuk Pansuh

Item	Statement	Frequency/ Percentage					\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation Level Mean
		1	2	3	4	5			
B1	Manuk Pansuh has a spicy taste.	3 (6)	4 (8)	2 (4)	10 (20)	31 (62)	3.30	1.11	Moderate
B2	Manuk Pansuh has a sweet taste.	0 (0)	4 (8)	0 (0)	13 (26)	33 (66)	3.58	0.64	High
B3	Manuk Pansuh has a bitter taste.	0 (0)	3 (6)	0 (0)	17 (34)	30 (60)	3.54	0.61	High
B4	Manuk Pansuh has a sour taste.	5 (10)	9 (18)	4 (8)	17 (34)	15 (15)	2.68	1.24	Moderate
Mean Average						3.28		Moderate	

3.3 Perception Towards Ingredients of Manuk Pansuh

Table 4 shows the analysis of the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh ingredients.

Table 4 Perception analysis of the ingredients of Manuk Pansuh

Item	Statement	Frequency/ Percentage					Mean score	SD	Interpretation Level Mean
		1	2	3	4	5			
C1	Manuk Pansuh cannot be prepared without <i>bungkang</i> leaves.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (20)	40 (80)	3.80	0.41	High
C2	Manuk Pansuh cannot be prepared without <i>tepus</i> shoots.	0 (0)	3 (6)	0 (0)	4 (8)	43 (86)	3.80	0.53	High
C3	I feel that ingredients such as <i>bungkang</i> leaves are difficult to obtain nowadays.	4 (8)	8 (16)	0 (0)	17 (34)	21 (42)	3.10	0.95	Moderate
C4	<i>Tepus</i> shoots are the main ingredient besides chicken in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	18 (36)	31 (62)	3.60	0.53	High
C5	I feel that ingredients such as <i>tepus</i> shoots are difficult to obtain nowadays.	2 (4)	2 (4)	0 (0)	8 (16)	38 (76)	3.64	0.75	High
C6	<i>Ayam kampung</i> or <i>ayam daging</i> gives the same taste in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	3 (6)	15 (30)	0 (0)	15 (30)	17 (34)	2.92	0.94	Moderate
C7	Ingredients such as lemongrass are by-ingredients in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	16 (32)	34 (68)	3.68	0.47	High
C8	Ingredients such as tapioca leaves can give an aroma to Manuk Pansuh	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17 (34)	33 (66)	3.66	0.48	High

C9	Ingredients such as garlic are by-ingredients in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	0 (0)	3 (6)	1 (2)	10 (20)	36 (72)	3.60	0.78	High
C10	Ingredients such as shallots are by-ingredients in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	2 (4)	4 (8)	2 (4)	19 (38)	23 (46)	3.18	1.02	Moderate
C11	Ingredients such as <i>kantan</i> flowers are by-ingredients in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh.	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)	8 (16)	39 (78)	3.66	0.80	High
Mean score Average							3.51		High

The findings of the study show that item C1 (Manuk Pansuh cannot be prepared without *bungking* leaves) recorded a mean score = 3.83 (SD= 0.44) and C2 (Manuk Pansuh cannot be prepared without *tepus* shoots) mean score = 3.97 (SD= 0.28) which is the highest mean score. Next, the second highest mean score is item C7 (Ingredients such as lemongrass are by-ingredients in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh) mean score = 3.68 (SD= 0.47). In addition, item C5 (I feel that ingredients such as *tepus* shoots are difficult to obtain nowadays) mean score = 3.64 (SD= 0.75) which is moderate. The lowest mean score is item C6 (*Ayam kampung* or *ayam daging* gives the same taste in the preparation of Manuk Pansuh) with a mean score = 2.92 (SD= 0.94). The average mean score for the perception of Manuk Pansuh ingredients is 3.51 which is at a high level. The findings of the study show that the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh ingredients is at a high level. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of John (2017). This is because the use of local ingredients in cuisine based on local plants or animals is used and made one of the traditions of a race (Boesi, 2014; Montanari, 2006). In addition, local ingredients are also influenced by geographical factors (Semple, 2023; Stein & Santini, 2022; Enthoven & Van den Broeck, 2021; Kwon et al., 2015). The origins and traditions of the use of local materials provide a clear and broad picture of what is found in the natural resources of a country or region.

3.4 Perception Towards Cooking Method of Manuk Pansuh

Table 5 shows an analysis of the Iban community's perception of Manuk Pansuh cooking methods. The findings of the study show that item D2 (I cook Manuk Pansuh using bamboo tubes because it is an ancestral tradition) recorded a mean score = 3.94 (SD= 0.24) which is the highest mean score. Next, the second highest mean score is item D4 (Manuk Pansuh cooked in bamboo tubes makes it more durable) mean score is 3.86 (SD= 0.35). In addition, item D1 (I prefer to cook Manuk Pansuh using the traditional method of using bamboo because it has the aroma of bamboo) mean score of 3.74 (SD= 0.44) which is a moderate mean score. The lowest mean score is item D7 (Cooking Manuk Pansuh using modern cooking utensils produces a delicious taste) with a mean score of 2.98 (SD= 1.08). In conclusion, the average mean score for the perception of Manuk Pansuh's cooking method is 3.56 which is at a high level. The findings of the study show that the Iban community's perception of the Manuk Pansuh cooking method is at a high level. This is because the Iban community still maintains the method of cooking Manuk Pansuh using bamboo tubes. According to Empaga (2022), the word Pansuh itself means cooking in bamboo tubes over firewood. The concept of Manuk Pansuh is cooking chicken meat using bamboo tubes on firewood. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Quintero-Angel, Mendoza-Salazar & Martinez-Giron (2022), Poulain et al., (2020), and Chen, Huang and Hou (2020) showed that most respondents agreed that modernization affects change in the sense of authenticity of traditional food. Traditional food must be prepared and cooked traditionally to maintain quality, nutrition, and taste (Osorio et al., 2022; Guiné et al., 2021; Suleman, 2020). This shows that the Iban community still maintains the tradition of cooking Manuk Pansuh using the traditional cooking method which is using bamboo tubes.

Table 5 Perception analysis of the cooking method of Manuk Pansuh

Item	Statement	Frequency/ Percentage					\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation Level Mean
		1	2	3	4	5			
D1	I prefer to cook Manuk Pansuh using the traditional method of using bamboo because it has the aroma of bamboo.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	13 (26)	37 (74)	3.74	0.44	High
D2	I cook Manuk Pansuh using bamboo tubes because it is an ancestral tradition.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (6)	47 (94)	3.94	0.24	High
D3	I cook Manuk Pansuh using bamboo tubes even though it takes a long time.	3 (6)	11 (22)	0 (0)	18 (36)	18 (36)	3.02	0.91	Moderate
D4	Manuk Pansuh cooked in bamboo tubes makes it more durable.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (14)	43 (86)	3.86	0.35	High
D5	Manuk Pansuh cannot be cooked using cooking utensils other than bamboo tubes.	3 (6)	4 (8)	0 (0)	4 (8)	39 (78)	3.58	0.88	High
D6	Cooking Manuk Pansuh using cooking utensils other than bamboo tubes will cause a different taste.	0 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	8 (16)	41 (82)	3.80	0.45	High
D7	Cooking Manuk Pansuh using modern cooking utensils produces a delicious taste.	5 (10)	8 (16)	1 (2)	16 (32)	20 (40)	2.98	1.08	Moderate
Mean score Average						3.56		High	

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the discussion show the Iban community's perception of the taste, ingredients and cooking method of Manuk Pansuh at a very good level. This is because the Iban community knows Manuk Pansuh is a traditional food that has been passed down from generation to generation. The researcher was able to find out that the Iban community is indeed proud of the traditional Manuk Pansuh food because of its unique flavor, ingredients, and cooking methods that have their differences. Through the results of this study, it can be shown that the Iban community still defends and maintains the traditions and heritage of Manuk Pansuh.

Based on the research that has been carried out, the researcher suggests that this research related to Manuk Pansuh be continued in the future. Some of the suggestions put forward by the next researcher, which is that this study focuses on the study of taste perception, ingredients, and cooking methods of Manuk Pansuh. Next, future researchers can study the dominant food of the Iban people other than Manuk Pansuh such as Kuih Penyaram and Kuih Penganan. This heritage can be continued and will not disappear with time. It is suggested that the next study can involve the Iban community living in urban areas as well as rural areas. In addition, increasing the number of study samples and the location of the study is not only done on one longhouse but every longhouse in the entire Betong Division. Finally, this study can be conducted in a comparative study between locations in Sarawak.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: **study conception and design:** Emmanuel Aaron Alvin Uping Bernadine, Nurul Hidayah Liew Abdullah; **data collection:** Emmanuel Aaron Alvin Uping Bernadine; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Emmanuel Aaron Alvin Uping Bernadine, Nurul Hidayah Liew Abdullah; **manuscript preparation:** Emmanuel Aaron Alvin Uping Bernadine, Nurul Hidayah Liew Abdullah. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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