

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Cassava plastic (bioplastic) is known as the eco-friendly substitute to conventional synthetic plastic. As suggested by its name, cassava plastic's main ingredient is cassava starch. Therefore, it is considered biodegradable. Biodegradable packaging is made from materials that can dissolve harmlessly into the environment. In other words, they can be returned to nature after usage, making them environmentally friendly plastics (Wahyuningtyas & Suryanto, 2017). Packaging plays an essential role in preserving and enhancing products, especially in the food and beverages business. According to Robertson (2005), the main functions of food packaging are to protect, to contain, to communicate, and for convenience.

This bioplastic material extracted from cassava starch is essential because it is a better option than conventional plastic as it is easier to decompose. Thus, it helps reduce plastic waste in Indonesia. Additionally, Indonesia is the world's third-largest cassava producer. Therefore, bioplastic from cassava starch is considered less expensive than bioplastic made from other starches (Wahyuningtyas & Suryanto, 2018).

This study was trying to find out the prospective customers' perspective on the use of cassava plastic for *Sweet Lab's* cookies. This was to see if it was eligible to replace the function of conventional plastic packaging without changing the quality of *Sweet Lab's* cookies through the customer's perception.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are studies similar to the use of cassava plastic as food packaging, represented under the studies about bioplastic material as food packaging. For instance, a review of the use of bioplastic packaging has been done in the Review of bioplastics as food packaging by Hong et al. (2021).

This review explains the advantages and disadvantages of bioplastic packaging in detail. They also mention the problem of bioplastic weakness in water retention, and the strength and ability to be a single-use plastic to contain fruits, vegetables, cheese, etc. Another review by Manali Shah et al. (2021) with the title Bioplastic for the future: A review then and now, reviewed the use of bioplastic as a safer option for food packaging.

Similar to the previous studies mentioned, this study will specifically talk about the prospective customers' perception on the use of cassava plastic, one of many bioplastics. This study would review the prospective customers' perception of cassava plastic as the packaging for *Sweet Lab's* cookies and the functionality as a food packaging based on the book called Food Packaging Principles and Practice by Gordon L Robertson (2005).

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this study is the innovative economic industry.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on finding the customers' perception on the use of cassava plastic as packaging for *Sweet Lab's* cookies to see if it is eligible to replace the function of conventional plastic.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. What is the prospective customers' perception of cassava plastic as the packaging for *Sweet Lab's* cookies?

2. To find out the differences between cassava plastic and regular plastic as a packaging for Sweet Lab's cookies?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the customers' perception of cassava plastic as the packaging for *Sweet Lab's* cookies.
2. To find out the differences between cassava plastic and regular plastic as a packaging for Sweet Lab's cookies.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study's outcome is highly significant and beneficial for future businesses considering switching from traditional plastic packaging to cassava packaging without changing the quality of the product. The results of this study may provide crucial information about the customers' view on cassava plastic packaging in replacing the function of conventional plastic packaging. This outcome of this study will also help future businesses decide whether or not they want to replace their current packaging with an eco-friendly option, such as cassava plastic.

1.7 Definition of Term

1. Prospective customer

Prospective customer is an individual or company that fits the seller's target market and is able and/or interested in purchasing the product (Lilyquist, 2020).

2. Customer

Customer is an individual or company that purchases goods or services from a goods/service business (Tomczyk, 2018)

3. Perception

Perception is an individual's first impression which then acts as a determinant as to how they feel about the information received (Li & Li, 2021).

4. Cassava plastic

Cassava plastic is a type of bioplastic extracted from cassava starch as its raw material (Wahyuningtyas & Suryanto, 2017).

5. Packaging

Packaging as defined by Robertson (2005) is an essential material used to protect goods to ensure safe delivery from the manufacturing process to the consumer's hand.

6. *Sweet Lab's*

Sweet Lab's is an upcoming bakery and pastry shop based in Semarang with its featured menu, soft cookies.