

Factors Influencing the Choice of Seblak Cuisine by Muslim Women in Surabaya Based on Consumer Behavior Theory

Indah Puspita Sari*

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

02040123021@uinsa.ac.id

*Correspondence

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Abstract

Indonesia's rich culinary diversity reflects the culture and creativity of its society; however, the emergence of food trends like seblak illustrates changing consumer preferences, especially among youth and Muslim women. The rapid growth of seblak stalls across regions and its popularity for spicy, halal flavors make it an intriguing phenomenon to study from a consumer behavior perspective. This research aims to understand the reasons why Muslim women in Surabaya choose seblak using a quantitative approach and semi-structured interviews. The findings show that the main factors are the delicious and spicy taste, affordable price, easy accessibility, and guaranteed halal status. Respondents also mention that seblak is chosen because it is easy to find nearby and is supported by social media trends. Despite awareness of potential negative health effects from over-consumption, most still see seblak as a practical and enjoyable snack. This study contributes to understanding the behavioral factors of Muslim consumers and enriches the discourse on Indonesia's culinary heritage as a cultural identity.

Keywords: *Culinary, Seblak, Muslim Women, Consumer Behavior, Indonesia.*

Abstrak

Kekayaan kuliner Indonesia mencerminkan keberagaman budaya dan kreativitas masyarakatnya, namun munculnya tren kuliner seperti seblak menunjukkan dinamika preferensi dan perilaku konsumen, terutama kalangan muda dan Muslimah. Tingginya pertumbuhan kedai seblak di berbagai daerah dan preferensi terhadap rasa pedas serta kehalalannya menjadi fenomena menarik untuk dikaji dari aspek perilaku konsumen. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui alasan-alasan Muslimah di Surabaya memilih kuliner seblak menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan wawancara semi terstruktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor utama dalam memilih seblak adalah rasa enak dan pedas, harga terjangkau, kemudahan akses, serta kehalalan yang dijamin. Responden juga menyatakan bahwa mereka memilih seblak karena mudah ditemukan di sekitar tempat tinggal dan didukung oleh tren media sosial. Meskipun ada kesadaran akan efek negatif konsumsi berlebihan, mayoritas tetap menganggap seblak sebagai camilan praktis dan menyenangkan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memahami faktor perilaku konsumen Muslimah dan memperkaya kajian tentang kekayaan kuliner Indonesia sebagai identitas budaya.

Kata Kunci: *Kuliner, Seblak, Muslimah, Perilaku Konsumen, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a majority Muslim population. In Islamic teachings, Muslims are required to consume halal food, which is food that complies with religious law. However, in emergency or urgent situations, Islam allows Muslims to eat what is considered haram (forbidden) in order to preserve life. Therefore, choosing halal food is part of a Muslim's obligation to practice their faith.

Indonesia is rich in culinary diversity. From Sabang to Merauke, each region has its own dishes. This culinary variety reflects the creativity of society in utilizing local food ingredients, both plant-based and animal-based. As an archipelagic country with lush flora and fauna, Indonesia has a vast array of traditional dishes spread across various regions. Some of these dishes have even become well-known internationally, making the culinary pride of the Nusantara (archipelago) on the global stage.

Culinary arts are an element of national culture that is easily recognized as an identity of a community. Cuisine is one of the cultural components that demonstrate social relationships.¹ Indonesia's culinary diversity is extraordinary, with each region offering its signature dishes that serve as its identity. The methods of culinary processing vary from region to region, including frying, sautéing, and grilling. Local specialties do not only reflect unique flavors but also become markers of cultural identity, distinguishing one region from another.²

One of Indonesia's culinary favorites among young people today is seblak, a traditional dish from Bandung, West Java. Seblak is an acronym for “*segak*” and “*nyegak*,” meaning sharp or pungent, characterized by the use of cikur (galangal), which is one of the main ingredients.³ Seblak is an innovative variation from traditional krupuk (crackers), made in a way that is quite different. Usually, crackers are fried and served as a side dish, but thanks to innovation from Bandung, these crackers are boiled until soft and sautéed with various spices such as shallots, garlic, pepper, salt, and cikur (galangal).⁴

The history of seblak is said to date back to the independence era in Parahyangan, specifically in Garut. There is a dish called *kerupuk leor*, which translates into Indonesian as “soft crackers.” Some say that seblak originated from an abundance of crackers in Bandung at that time. Old crackers did not provide the same taste as fresh ones. Gradually, these crackers were processed into seblak, leading to its creation.⁵

The price of seblak varies, ranging from five thousand to over ten thousand rupiahs, making it affordable for various segments. Many innovations are continually introduced, such as selling seblak in practical packaging that makes it easy for consumers

¹ Sri Utami, “Kuliner Sebagai Identitas Budaya: Perspektif Komunikasi Lintas Budaya,” *CoverAge: Journal of Strategic Communication* 8, no. 2 (March 1, 2018): 36–44, <https://doi.org/10.35814/coverage.v8i2.588>.

² Yanti Mulia Roza et al., “Identitas Budaya Dan Sosial Pada Makanan Khas Daerah: Tinjauan Terhadap Perilaku Konsumsi Masyarakat Muslim Pada Bulan Ramadan Di Indonesia,” *Komitmen: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen* 4, no. 1 (April 7, 2023): 305–15, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jim.v4i1.25031>.

³ Stefanie Priskilla Atteng et al., “Tren Kuliner Seblak Sebagai Faktor Pendukung Perekonomian Masyarakat Di Era Milenial,” *De Cive : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* 1, no. 3 (March 28, 2021): 73–78, <https://doi.org/10.56393/decive.v1i3.289>.

⁴ Murdijati Gardjito, Heni Pridia Rukmini Sari, and Marosimy Millaty, *Kuliner Sunda Nikmat Sedap Melegenda* (UGM PRESS, 2024).

⁵ Suci Sandi Wachyuni, *Gastronomi Indonesia Sebagai Identitas Budaya Dan Daya Tarik Wisata* (Mata Kata Inspirasi, 2023).

to carry. Furthermore, the fillings of seblak have also developed along with current trends. Many seblak stalls now offer a buffet concept, where buyers can choose their own fillings according to taste. Today, the fillings tend to be dominated by frozen foods like sausages, tempura, and cikuw (galangal), which further increase the appeal of this culinary. In the past, seblak fillings only consisted of crackers soaked in hot water, then cooked with garlic, *cikur*, and bird's eye chili.⁶

Innovation in culinary presentation aims to enhance food quality to be more attractive, highly marketable, and favored by consumers, as well as to improve operational efficiency in product and marketing processes.⁷ This includes the emergence of frozen food innovations and new culinary products that press down competition among food entrepreneurs, as many business players innovate to introduce new products to the market. This is similar to entrepreneurs who innovate by adding various toppings to seblak, which now no longer contains only crackers.

Based on the explanation above, the author conducted a study to identify the reasons why Muslim women in Surabaya choose seblak, analyzed through the Howard-Sheth theory of consumer behavior. Previous research has not extensively examined the motives stated by Muslim women in selecting seblak as their preferred culinary. For example, Satria and Pratama's study explains that seblak consumers tend to focus more on product quality and service rather than aesthetic value or satisfaction metrics.⁸ Additionally, Atteng et al. found that the trend of seblak influences economic growth and increases millennial interest in regional cuisine.⁹

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of consumer behavior studies, particularly in understanding local culinary preferences among urban Muslim women. By applying the Howard-Sheth model of consumer behavior, this study enriches scientific understanding of the factors that influence consumers' decision-making in food choices, especially within specific social groups (Muslim women in Surabaya). On a social level, this research can facilitate discussions on how traditional foods like seblak are not only fleeting trends but also part of social dynamics and group identities, such as Muslim women.

The preference for seblak among Muslim women in Surabaya certainly does not come without reasons, considering the rapid growth of seblak stalls, especially around Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya in Wonocolo and Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa) in Ketintang. This phenomenon indicates that seblak has become one of the favorite foods among the community, particularly among Muslim women. The popularity can be seen from the busy seblak stalls largely visited by women, while male visitors are relatively fewer.

⁶ Wachyuni.

⁷ Indria Ariyanti, "Ekosistem Kuliner Indonesia Berstandar Global," *Pedagogy: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 10, no. 1 (January 30, 2023): 81–88, <https://doi.org/10.51747/jp.v10i1.1252>.

⁸ Deka Satria and Sofri Editia Pratama, "Kajian Kepuasan Pelanggan Pada Seblak Di Pulau Jawa," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (June 7, 2024): 1079–88.

⁹ Atteng et al., "Tren Kuliner Seblak Sebagai Faktor Pendukung Perekonomian Masyarakat Di Era Milenial."



Figure 1. Seblak around UIN Sunan Ampel (Source: Google Maps)

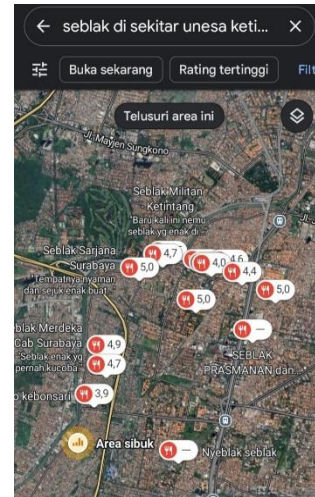


Figure 2. Seblak stalls around UNESA (Source: Google Maps)

Data from Google Maps, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, indicate the presence of numerous seblak stalls around UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya and Unesa. This phenomenon reflects the high interest of the community, especially among young people, towards seblak, which has now become one of the favorite foods among youth.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this journal discussion is qualitative. Data collection techniques include literature review, involving the examination of books, journals, and articles related to the theme. Data sources were obtained through interviews with Muslim informants in Surabaya. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview techniques. According to Nietzel, Bernstein, and Millich (1998),¹⁰ semi-structured interviews involve the interviewer preparing a list of questions to be asked but allowing the order of questions to be flexible based on the flow of conversation. The theory employed for analysis is the Howard-Sheth consumer behavior model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Surabaya city, as the capital of East Java Province, is the second-largest city in Indonesia. It is a diverse place to live, with various ethnic groups, cultures, and religions, reflecting the character of a society that lives side by side. Surabaya is known for its signature dish, rujak cingur. Rujak cingur is made from a mixture of vegetables such as cucumber, cabbage, bean sprouts, long beans, and *kangkung* (water spinach), combined with cooked cingur (the snout part of a cow), which is then poured with a sauce made from petis (shrimp paste), brown sugar, salt, and ground chili.¹¹

Although Surabaya is famous for its local specialty, rujak cingur, the number of stalls selling this dish is not as many as those selling seblak. The limited availability of rujak cingur stalls compared to seblak indicates that consumer interest, especially among

¹⁰ Fadhallah, *Wawancara* (Jakarta: UNJ Press, 2021).

¹¹ Daniel Pandu Mau, Titin Lestarringsih, and Yesarela Pandu Mau, "Kuliner Tradisional Sebagai Daya Tarik Wisata Surabaya," *The Sages Journal* 1, no. 01 (August 29, 2022): 27–34, <https://doi.org/10.61195/sages.v1i1.5>.

the youth, tends to be lower for rujak cingur. Seblak is a traditional cuisine from West Java that has now spread widely across Indonesia.

Seblak is served with warm broth and a variety of toppings, such as crackers, sausage, dumplings, chicken feet, noodles, mushrooms, or eggs. The main seasoning uses kencur (aromatic ginger), which gives seblak its distinctive flavor. Seblak is usually cooked when customers order, with each person selecting their preferred toppings. Therefore, seblak is not prepared in large quantities all at once, considering that everyone has different tastes and preferred combinations of toppings. Seblak stalls are typically more frequented by women than men.

Thus, the opinions of several informants, especially Muslim women in Surabaya, are presented regarding their reasons for choosing seblak as their preferred culinary option over other foods. Informant AH explains his personal experience as follows:

“I rarely eat seblak, maybe once every three months. The taste of seblak is delicious and suits my palate, especially during the rainy season because it’s a warm, soupy food.”

This aligns with informant AF’s explanation:

“I like the taste of seblak, but I don’t eat it often because I understand that it’s not very good for health. Seblak is tasty, spicy, and has a chewy texture from the crackers.”

Informant SD shares her experience in choosing seblak cuisine:

“I don’t eat it often, but somehow I do. Usually, I make it myself with ingredients I already have. So, if I want to make a soup noodle, it sometimes accidentally turns into a kind of seblak—even though I don’t add specific seblak spices, it’s just the appearance that makes it look like seblak, even though that’s not my intention. For me, seblak encompasses feelings of FOMO and my desires. I also buy bakso or meatballs from seblak sellers, which usually include vegetables and sometimes I add chicken fillet when cooking seblak. It seems that besides monosodium glutamate, I really into seblak.”

Informant NA explains her view on seblak: *“I rarely eat seblak. If I want a snack, just once or twice, I’d choose seblak.”* Informant IZ shares her thoughts on seblak:

“I rarely eat seblak because I think it’s not very healthy. I like seblak because it’s the kind of food I enjoy—soupy and spicy. I like a fresh-tasting broth and various toppings.”

Informant GA offers her opinion: *“I rarely eat seblak, but in my view, seblak has a unique flavor and is synonymous with spicy food.”* It is explained in the background that currently, seblak stalls have been mushrooming in various places, showing that seblak has become one of the favorite foods among the community, especially among young people. Therefore, the writer asked the informants again, apart from taste, whether there are other factors that influence their choice of seblak as a culinary option.

Informant AH states several reasons:

“Apart from the taste, I choose seblak because dishes like soto or rawon are eaten with rice. It’s too heavy. So, seblak is an option for a soupy snack. Although when calculating calories, it’s quite high and can cause weight gain, I think it’s still more than rice, so seblak offers good taste and isn’t very filling. Even though the place is far away, I still like the taste of seblak, and I will go there. The most important thing is that seblak is halal food.”

Az (AZ) informant explains his reasons:

“Actually, I like the taste of soto, but this is a heavy meal, and I also don’t like foods based on goat or beef. The taste of seblak is good, spicy, and there’s a MSG flavor. When I find a seblak stall I like, even if it’s far from my place, I keep trying to go. And clearly, seblak is halal; when it comes to price, many are affordable and taste good.”

SD (SD) informant explains as follows:

“Honestly, I want other foods like es teler or crispy chicken, and seblak was not planned. But seblak cuisine is an easy choice because many vendors sell it, and I have tried many places, so I understand how it tastes. The key to good seblak depends on the person cooking.”

NA (NA) informant states her opinion as follows: *“It could be because there is a seblak seller near my place, so I want to try it. Of course, I choose seblak because it is halal.”* IZ (IZ) gives her opinion about seblak:

“I choose seblak because the seller is close to my house. In terms of price, it’s indeed similar to other foods like rawon. I think seblak has less nutrition compared to rawon or soto, which still contain protein from chicken or meat, while seblak is just dough soaked in crackers—how could it have nutrition? And most importantly, because seblak is halal food.”

GA (GA) explains: *“Even though there are seblak stalls around my house, I do not choose seblak as my cuisine, but it could be because I see seblak as halal food.”*

Based on the explanations from the informants, the author has created a chart to categorize the findings obtained. The graph is used to facilitate readers’ understanding of the results presented through numerical representation. The details of the graph can be seen in Figure 3.

For Muslim women as consumers, there is the freedom to choose various types of preferred cuisine, but they must still adhere to Islamic principles. A Muslim woman is obliged to ensure that the food consumed is halal and not contrary to religious teachings. Seblak, as one of the popular culinary dishes, is essentially considered halal unless it contains prohibited ingredients, such as pork fat or other haram elements.

Currently, the fillings of seblak dishes are becoming more diverse, no longer limited to just crackers. The variety of toppings offered makes the price of seblak vary depending on the consumer’s choice. In Surabaya, as the second-largest city in Indonesia, many stalls offer seblak with different flavors to suit the diverse tastes of customers. Typically, seblak vendors operate using simple tents on the roadside, but some well-

known vendors have expanded their business by opening small shops.

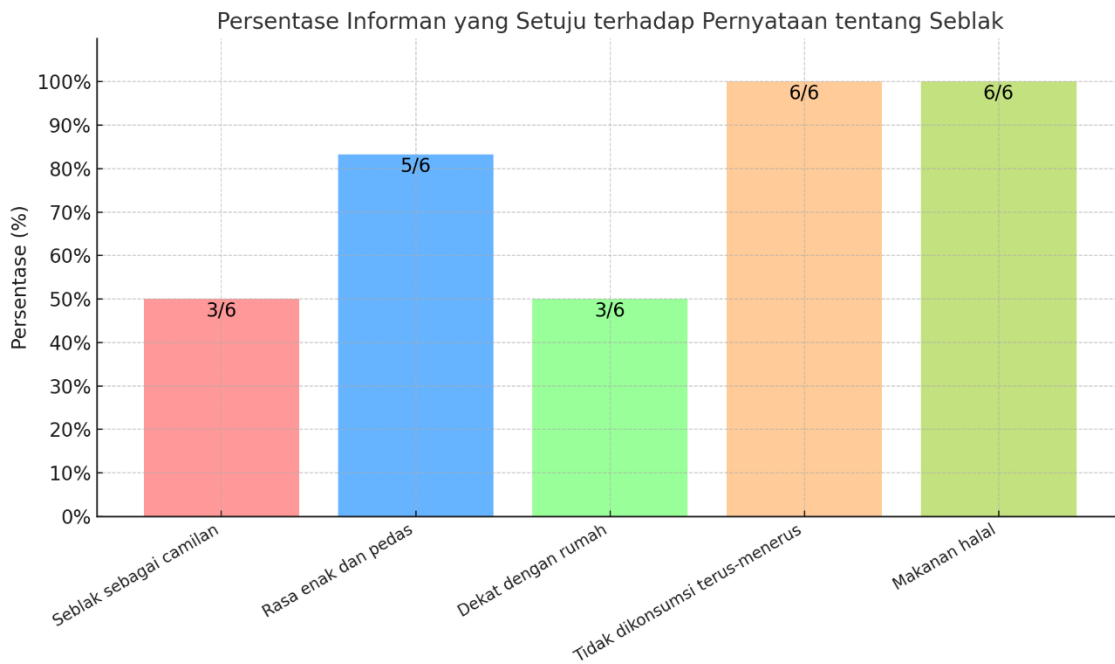


Figure 3. Informant Percentage Graph

The choice of cuisine among Muslim women can be analyzed using consumer behavior theories. This journal presents the Howard-Sheth model of consumer behavior. This model is an approach to analyze the combined impact of social, psychological, and marketing factors on consumer purchase behavior or preferences and buyers in the industry, arranged in a logical sequence for information processing. The model was developed by John A. Howard in 1963, and later, in 1969, he, together with Jagadish Sheth, introduced the Howard-Sheth Model.¹²

The Howard-Sheth consumer behavior theory can be used to help explain and understand consumer behavior, although it does not predict it precisely. The model contains four main elements:

1. Input: The input variables in this model are stimuli present in the consumer's environment. These can be commercial stimuli originating from marketing activities, such as signals related to brand (including price, quality, uniqueness, service, and availability). They can also be symbolic stimuli associated with advertising activities. Social stimuli may originate from word-of-mouth communication within family, social class, and reference groups.
2. Hypothesis Formation: This is an internal process within the consumer that describes the relationship process between input and purchase output. The sequence of hypotheses consists of two parts: first, the educated observation of attention, bias in observation, and consumer investigation; second, the learning sequence includes motives, brand understanding, purchase criteria, intentions and goals for buying, and the expected satisfaction.

¹² Abdul Kholik et al., *Perilaku Konsumen Ruang Lingkup Dan Konsep Dasar* (Bandung: Penerbit Widina Bhakti Persada Bandung, 2020).

3. Output: The output of the model is the decision to purchase. There is a tendency to buy favored brands. Attitude refers to the consumer's evaluation of a particular product brand's ability to satisfy their desires.
4. Exogenous Variables: Although their influence is not substantial, exogenous variables affecting consumer behavior are significant, including the importance of the purchase, personality traits, financial status, urgency of needs, social and organizational factors, social class, and culture.¹³

The Howard-Sheth model emphasizes repeat purchasing and depicts the dynamics of purchasing behavior over a period. According to this model, individuals have motives and opinions, and they make decisions through a learning process. Repeated purchasing simplifies the decision-making process.¹⁴

In analyzing the reasons why Muslim women in Surabaya choose seblak as their culinary preference, the Howard-Sheth consumer choice theory can be applied. This model offers four points that can analyze seblak selection among Muslim women in Surabaya. The reasons conveyed by the informants can be examined through the perspective of the Howard-Sheth consumer choice theory. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of their views and provides broader insights.

Based on the stimulus drive from the consumer environment, the informants stated that they choose seblak because it is easily accessible. Three informants mentioned that seblak can be purchased easily around their residence, making it a practical choice. Additionally, symbolic stimuli from advertising also influence consumer preferences. Currently, several celebrities and influencers serve as ambassadors for seblak, aiming to promote the product widely. One example is Rafael Tan, a celebrity and singer who was appointed as a seblak ambassador after posting a video of his own seblak-making process, which then inspired many people. Besides advertising, information about seblak also spreads through word of mouth, both within families and among friends, further strengthening its popularity.

The hypothesis arrangement explains that the educated observation pattern includes attention, observation, and investigation of consumer behavior. This process also involves consumer learning that evolves with their experiences and expectations. In this context, Muslim women pay attention to choosing seblak because it offers affordable prices, distinctive spicy flavor, and a variety of toppings. This shows that the product attributes align with the needs and interests of consumers. Then, the bias in observation suggests that Muslim women might have had positive experiences with seblak, making them more likely to choose it. Consumer investigation prior to purchasing seblak probably involves comparing it with other culinary options such as rujak cingur, soto, or rawon. According to the informants, seblak offers a snack that suits their taste and is budget-friendly.

The learning process involves motives where the informants seek practical foods

¹³ Sri Murwanti, "Perilaku Konsumen Dalam Memilih Perumahan Pada Perumahan Cipta Laras Bulusur Wonogiri," *Benefit: Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis (Jurnal ini Sudah Migrasi)* 13, no. 1 (2009): 52–60, <https://doi.org/10.23917/benefit.v13i1.1298>.

¹⁴ Handayani, "Model Howard & Sheth Sebagai Alternatif Memahami Perilaku Konsumen Dalam Manajemen Pemasaran," *Dharma Ekonomi STIE Dharmaputra Semarang* No. 35 Th XIX (2012).

with delicious flavors. Interestingly, some informants stated that even though their favorite seblak is located far from their house, they are willing to buy it, even if it means sacrificing time and additional costs. This can be linked to brand understanding, which is explained as when a certain brand provides a higher sense of satisfaction, consumers tend to trust and choose it. As Yunus and Arief's research states,¹⁵ a strong brand image influences respondents by assessing product quality; a good product will generate consumer satisfaction. Moreover, the purpose and goal of choosing seblak for the informants is to get a light snack that fulfills their desire for taste and appropriate portion size. Consumers are confident that seblak provides a satisfying culinary experience, both in terms of flavor and comfort during consumption.

Although some of the informants state that they prefer seblak over other cuisines, they also acknowledge that consuming seblak continuously is not good for health. As mentioned in the results chapter, all informants agree that seblak is not a cuisine meant for constant consumption. For instance, Wahyudi and Syaputri's research shows that excessive seblak intake can have negative impacts on health, especially on the digestive system, metabolism, and heart health.¹⁶ Negative effects on the digestive system include that the spicy content in seblak can irritate the stomach and cause digestive disturbances such as heartburn, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Seblak can also contribute to increasing obesity, heart diseases, and hypertension.

The third point is the output, which is the decision to purchase. The informants' attitudes toward seblak are measured based on their subjective evaluation. As research by Ibzan et al. explains,¹⁷ consumer variables are influenced by the satisfaction variable in repeated buying behavior. Reasons such as seblak being a halal cuisine, affordability, spicy flavor, and topping variations indicate that these attributes play a key role in creating a positive perception of seblak. Several informants believe that seblak is a light snack that is not heavy like rice, which shows they also consider the functional aspect of the product according to their lifestyle needs.

Interviews with six informants reveal that they choose seblak because it is considered halal, unless additional ingredients that alter its halal status are added. In terms of purchasing decisions, halal status is a primary factor for Muslim women in choosing seblak. As explained in Amini et al.'s study,¹⁸ Allah SWT commands Muslims to eat lawful (halal) food, as stated in the Qur'an and Hadith. Furthermore, Hamidan and Marsiah's research notes that Q.S. Al Maidah (5:88) and An Nahl (16:14) describe that the food and drink permitted for Muslims are those that are halal—allowed to be consumed and not prohibited by Islamic law. The food should also be tayyib, meaning

¹⁵ Fresha Febri Yunus and Ronny Firdiansyah Arief, "View Of Analisa Pengaruh Brand (Awareness, Association & Image) Dan Perceived (Quality & Value) Terhadap Purchase Intention Melalui Peran Mediasi Brand Loyalty," *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Bisnis Dan Inovasi Universitas Sam Ratulangi* Vol. 9 No. 3 (2022), <https://ejournal.unsrat.ac.id/v3/index.php/jmbi/article/view/44318/42669>.

¹⁶ Dhimas Wahyudi and Tantri Isna Syaputri, "Pengaruh Makanan Seblak Terhadap Kesehatan Tubuh," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (June 7, 2024): 1107–10.

¹⁷ Eliasaph Ibzan, Farida Balarabe, and Balarabe Jakada, "Consumer Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions," 2016.

¹⁸ Anisa Amini, Muhammad Iqbal Fasa, and Suharto Suharto, "Urgensi Halal Food Dalam Tinjauan Konsumsi Islami," *LIKUID: Jurnal Ekonomi Industri Halal* 2, no. 2 (August 1, 2022): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.15575/likuid.v2i2.16031>.

good, nutritious, and beneficial for health.¹⁹

The context of choosing seblak is driven by emotional motivation (satisfying spicy taste), economic motivation (affordable price), and practical motivation (easy to consume and light portions). Some informants mention that they like seblak because of its tasty and spicy flavor. To increase its appeal, seblak vendors innovate by adding various toppings, not only frozen food but also chicken feet, chicken bones, enoki mushrooms, and wood-ear mushrooms. These additional toppings not only diversify the presentation but also add nutritional value to seblak. As described in Dini et al.'s research, the broth of seblak is distinctive, with the addition of cikur (kencur), which is itself an attraction for those who enjoy its aroma and flavor.²⁰

Exogenous variables in the fourth point indicate that, although their influence is considered not very strong, a deeper analysis can offer interesting insights into consumer behavior dynamics. The importance of buying seblak is seen as a casual activity that does not require deep thought. Three of the six informants agree that seblak is easy to find around their homes. Despite its casual nature, based on the opinions of all six informants, seblak is not considered a suitable daily food due to potential health risks if consumed excessively or continuously. Personality traits also influence the choice of seblak; for example, consumers who enjoy new flavors, such as spicy tastes, might be more interested in purchasing seblak. It has been explained that seblak is a soupy dish containing soaked crackers with a spicy and savory flavor.²¹

The consumer's financial status also influences the choice of seblak. Seblak is often considered an easily accessible and economical food. If someone wants to make seblak ingredients themselves, these are readily found in markets or convenience stores. However, for those who intend to buy, many stalls currently sell seblak in their surrounding environment, although not all provide satisfying flavors. The affordable price of seblak makes it a favorite choice, but consumers with higher income tend to prefer more premium variations, such as adding exclusive toppings. As per the research by Intani et al.,²² it is noted that in the elite area of Dago, West Java, a mixed seblak containing vegetables, chicken, broccoli, beef, and cheese ranges between 10,000 – 15,000 IDR, whereas fillings like siomay, fried tofu balls, and crispy skin crackers are priced between 4,000 – 10,000 IDR.

Consumers' time constraints vary individually. The proliferation of seblak stalls in various locations makes this cuisine an attractive option in urgent situations, such as when consumers need quick, easily accessible, and filling food. The consumption of seblak can also be influenced by the atmosphere, such as spontaneous desires to enjoy spicy snacks. As explained by Pridynabilah,²³ women approaching menstruation

¹⁹ Rumnah, Hamidah, and Marsiah, "Makanan Dan Minuman Yang Baik Dan Halal Menurut Islam," *Cendekia : Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan* Vol. 2 No. 3 (2022).

²⁰ Syafila Muharama Dini et al., "Strategi Marketing Mix Dalam Meningkatkan Volume Penjualan Pada UMKM Waroeng Seblak Janda Mude Di Tanjung Pinang," *Prosiding Management Business Innovation Conference (MBIC)* 6, no. 1 (July 17, 2023): 266–78.

²¹ Dini et al.

²² Ria Intani T, "Kiat Penjual Makanan Tradisional dalam Menembus Pasar," *Patanjala* 6, no. 2 (June 1, 2014): 315–28, <https://doi.org/10.30959/patanjala.v6i2.202>.

²³ Annisa Pridynabilah, "Hubungan Premenstrual Syndrome (Pms) Dengan Perilaku Makan Dan Asupan Energi Mahasiswa Gizi Universitas Airlangga," *Healthy Tadulako Journal (Jurnal Kesehatan Tadulako)*

experience PMS (PreMenstrual Syndrome), which affects their psychological state. This journal states that 59.7% of students experiencing PMS symptoms have increased eating desires, with the highest cravings for spicy foods at 48.5%. The desire to enjoy spicy cuisine makes seblak a suitable choice.

Social and organizational factors, such as social habits of eating together with friends or family, can influence the decision to purchase seblak. This aligns with the research by Indarwati and Sefrina, which shows that food choices are influenced by self-awareness and motivations or support from family or environment.²⁴ If someone within a group recommends seblak, other consumers are likely to be influenced to try it. Furthermore, the popularity of seblak is currently high due to social media influence, which strengthens consumer preference for this culinary. Class and culture also explain that seblak has become part of Indonesia's culinary culture, widely known across various social classes. Consumers from different social backgrounds may prefer certain types of seblak, such as traditional seblak made only with crackers or modern seblak that has been innovated with different fillings and appearances.

From the insights of the informants, they state that they do not consume seblak continuously because they understand that seblak is not a healthy food. The MSG content in seblak indeed provides a delicious taste, as explained by Adryanto (2004) in Lailatul Badriyah,²⁵ who states that MSG doesn't actually have a taste itself, but when added to food, it forms free glutamate acid that is detected by specific receptors in the brain, enhancing the fundamental taste of food and making it much more savory and flavorful. Despite the reasons for choosing seblak—including its halal status, spicy flavor, affordable price, easy availability nearby, and varied toppings—the informants' awareness that excessive consumption of seblak can negatively impact health remains a positive value that should be continuously promoted. This is important because, like other snacks, seblak is not an ideal food for overconsumption.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia possesses a rich and diverse culinary heritage, with each region presenting signature dishes as expressions of local culture. Surabaya, as the capital of East Java, is famously known for its rujak cingur. However, seblak stalls have also proliferated throughout the city. These seblak shops are often crowded with women, who choose seblak for various reasons, such as its halal status, delicious and fresh spicy taste, affordable prices, and the convenience of finding it around their residence. Although seblak offers a tasty flavor, informants admit that they do not consume it continuously because they are aware that seblak is not a healthy food and should be avoided if consumed excessively.

For future research, it is recommended to explore further the diversity of seblak

8, no. 2 (May 31, 2022): 59–67, <https://doi.org/10.22487/htj.v8i2.508>.

²⁴ Nur Khofifah Indarwati and Linda Riski Sefrina, "Faktor Pemilihan Makanan Sebagai Tolak Ukur Pemenuhan Gizi Pada Generasi Muda: Literature Review," *Media Publikasi Promosi Kesehatan Indonesia (MPPKI)* 6, no. 12 (December 1, 2023): 2352–56, <https://doi.org/10.56338/mpki.v6i12.3959>.

²⁵ Lailatul Badriyah, "Edukasi Penggunaan Monosodium Glutamat (MSG) dalam Makanan Serta Efeknya Bagi Kesehatan," *Journal of Community Engagement and Empowerment* 1, no. 2 (December 16, 2019), <https://ojs.iik.ac.id/index.php/JCEE/article/view/293>.

as part of Indonesia's culinary wealth. Additionally, studies could delve into the origins of seblak to uncover cultural heritage from previous generations, which can enhance the identity of traditional Indonesian cuisine.

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