



## The Consumption Habits of Traditional Food and Fast Food on College Students

Sofya Maya<sup>1\*</sup>, Jamil Anshory<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Mulawarman, Indonesia

\*Correspondence: E-mail: [sofyaomay@gmail.com](mailto:sofyaomay@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The transformation of teenagers from students to college students has an impact on changes in lifestyle and eating patterns. Students' eating habits can also be influenced by the development of cafes and restaurants that serve foods made from processed fats and sugar which dominates. This condition can erode traditional food so that college students are no longer interested in consuming traditional food. This research aimed to describe the consumption habits of traditional food and fast food on college students.

**Research Methods:** The type of this research was quantitative, descriptive. Data collection taken from September to October 2023. Determining the number of samples used the total sampling method, namely all third semester nutrition college students at the State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau with an age range of 18 - 21 years, totaling 87 people.

**Research Result:** The result of this research showed that the college students had high frequently consumed Riau traditional food namely nasi lemak/lemak rice (10.3%), asam pedas ikan/spicy sour fish (5.7%), gulai ikan patin atau salai/catfish or smoked fish curry (5.7%), tumis belacan/stir-fry belacan (4.6%), and kemojo cake (4.6%). The college students had high frequently consumed fast food namely fried chicken (39.1%), batagor (20.7%), soup meatball (19.5%), dumplings (19.5%), and instant noodles (19.5%).

**Conclusion:** This research showed that the college students consumed fast food more often than traditional food.

### ARTICLE INFO

**Article History:**

Submitted/Received November 2024

First Revised November 2024

Accepted November 2024

First Available online November 2024

Publication Date December 2024

**Keyword:**

College Student; Traditional Food; Fast Food



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of teenagers from students to college students has an impact on changes in lifestyle and eating patterns. This is because most students have started to live independently, living far away from their parents so they have to be independent in living their daily lives, including their eating habits. Availability of food, easy access to buying food online, the influence of friends, and busy lecture schedules are several factors that can influence students' eating habits.

The majority of students are in the young adult age range (18-24 years) which is a critical period for the development of eating habits. Eating habits formed during this period will continue into the next life. Students' eating habits can also be influenced by the development of cafes and restaurants that serve processed foods made from the dominant fat and sugar, frequent hanging out at fast food restaurants or even consuming fast food. Foods with unique appearances and tastes can also influence students' food preferences. This condition can erode traditional food so that students are no longer interested in consuming traditional food.

Traditional food is a food heritage that has been passed down and has become entrenched in Indonesian society (Muhilal 1995), is steeped in local traditions (Winarno 1993), gives rise to certain sensory experiences with high nutritional value. In general, there are three categories of traditional food, namely various types of food, side dishes and drinks. Each group is divided into several types. The nutritional content varies in amount and type. The advantage of traditional food compared to modern food is that traditional food is made using local ingredients or produced locally. Traditional food which has a variety of local food elements can be used as a means to realize food diversity in strengthening national food security (Suter, 2014). Therefore, students as the nation's next generation are expected to continue to know and consume traditional food in order to continue to create food diversity.

Nowadays, students are increasingly interested in consuming fast food. This is shown in the results of Tarigan's (2012) research on college students at the Faculty of Medicine, University of North Sumatra, namely 37.9% very often and 33.7% often consume fast food. The same results were also shown in Widyantara's (2014) research, namely that 58.4% of college students often consumed fast food and Kinasih's (2021) research showed that 35.1% of college students had a high frequency of fast food consumption.

Fast food is usually always cooked and undergoes a very long process so that it loses the nutrients and enzymes that the body needs (Bahren et al., 2014). Apart from that, the high content of sodium, saturated fat, cholesterol and sugar in fast food can have a negative impact on health such as obesity and the risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, coronary heart disease and cancer (Sari 2008). Therefore, good habits and food choices during youth greatly determine health conditions in the elderly.

Third semester nutrition college students have adapted well to the environment around campus and their boarding house so that they already know the types of food sold around campus and their boarding house. Beside that, third semester college students already have an overview of knowledge about nutrition so they are expected to be able to apply their knowledge in daily food choices. Therefore, the author was interested in knowing the description of consumption habits of traditional food and fast food on college students.

## 2. METHODS

This type of research was quantitative, descriptive. Data collection taken from September to October 2023. Determining the number of samples used the total sampling method. The research sample was all third semester nutrition college students at the State Islamic

University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau with an age range of 18 - 21 years, totaling 87 people.

Data was obtained from the results of filling out questionnaires and the Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) for traditional food and fast food. The traditional foods in this research were Riau traditional foods, namely asam pedas ikan (spicy sour fish), ikan salai selais (selais smoked fish), gulai ikan patin (patin fish curry), sambal ikan salai (smoked fish sauce), tumis belacan (stir-fry belacan), nasi lemak (lemak rice), cinalok, lemang, anyang daun paku (fern leaves anyang), sambal tempoyak (tempoyak chilli sauce), fish floss, roti jala santan durian (durian coconut milk bread), sago noodles, kemojo cake, boulu berendam, lepat bugis, laksamana mengamuk, and air mata pengantin. The types of fast food in this research were fried chicken, hamburgers, steak, pizza, sandwiches, french fries, nuggets, hot dogs, instant noodles, instant porridge, sphagetti, dumplings, batagor, empek-empek, cilok, cimol, cireng, toast, cakwe, fried sausage, grilled sausage, fried tempura, grilled tempura, soup meatballs, fried meatballs, grilled meatballs, soto, bakpau, donuts, creps, kebabs, bakwan, fried bananas, chocolate bananas, rissoles, stuffed tofu, and seublak. Pocket money data was categorized based on the median, namely (a) Low (<Rp. 30,000 per day), (b) High (≥Rp. 30,000 per day). The FFQ results were categorized into 3 (three), namely (a) never; (b) rarely (<3 x a week); and (c) frequently (≥3 x a week). Research data was displayed in the form of descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were presented with numbers and percentages.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Sample Characteristics

The research sample was all third semester nutrition college students at the State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau with an age range of 18 – 21 years. Table 1 showed that most of the sample was 19 years old (66.7%). The total sample was 87 people consisting of 4 men (4.6%) and 83 women (95.4%). Most of the sample's pocket money was in the high category (81.6%), namely the sample has pocket money of more or equal to Rp. 30,000 a day. The minimum sample allowance per day is Rp. 10,000 and the maximum sample allowance per day is Rp. 70,000.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Characteristics	n	%	Average	Minimum-maximum
<b>Age</b>				
a) 18 years	6	6,9		
b) 19 years	58	66,7	19,2	18 s/d 21
c) 20 years	21	24,1		
d) 21 years	2	2,3		
<b>Gender</b>				
a) Male	4	4,6		
b) Female	83	95,4		
<b>Pocket Money (per day)</b>				
a) Low (< Rp. 30.000)	16	18,4		Rp. 10.000 s/d
b) High (≥Rp.30.000)	71	81,6	34.195	Rp. 70.000

The majority of college students were in the young adult age range (18-24 years). This age is a critical period for the development of eating habits. In this day and age, the number of cafes and unique eating places that serve food made from fat and sugar influences students' food preferences. Students also often hang out at fast food restaurants, which will increase fast food consumption.

Pocket money can influence a person's consumption patterns (Wahyudi, 2017). Student pocket money can come from parents, siblings, scholarships, or from work (Indriani, 2015). Generally, the higher the pocket money, the higher the expenditure on food consumption.

### 3.2. The Consumption Habbits of Traditional Food on College Students

Traditional food is a food heritage that has been passed down and has become entrenched in Indonesian society (Muhilal 1995), is steeped in local traditions (Winarno 1993), gives rise to certain sensory experiences with high nutritional value (European Communities 2007). Students as the nation's next generation are expected to continue to know and consume traditional food in order to create food diversity because traditional food contains elements of local food which can have an impact on national food security (Suter, 2014). Traditional food consumption on students is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Consumption Habbits of Traditional Food on College Students

No	Traditional Food	Categori					
		Never		Rarely		Frequently	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Asam Pedas Ikan (spicy sour fish)	21	24,1	61	70,1	5	5,7
2	Ikan Salais (selais smoked fish)	39	44,8	47	54,0	1	1,1
3	Fish curry (ex: patin/smoked fish)	26	29,9	56	64,4	5	5,7
4	Fish sauce (ex: smoked fish)	24	27,6	57	65,5	6	6,9
5	Stir-fry belacan (Typical chili sauce from Bengkalis, Riau)	42	48,3	41	47,1	4	4,6
6	Nasi lemak (lemak rice)	22	25,3	56	64,4	9	10,3
7	Cincalok (small shrimp fermented)	67	77,0	18	20,7	2	2,3
8	Lemang	20	23,0	66	75,9	1	1,1
9	Anyang daun paku (fearn leaves anyang)	54	62,1	32	36,8	1	1,1
10	Sambal tempoyak (tempoyak chili sauce)	62	71,3	25	28,7	0	0,0
11	Fish floss	71	81,6	15	17,2	1	1,1
12	Roti jala santan durian (durian coconut milk bread)	32	36,8	54	62,1	1	1,1
13	Sago noodles	32	36,8	52	59,8	3	3,4
14	Kemojo cake	16	18,4	67	77,0	4	4,6
15	Boulu berendam/halue telur	69	79,3	16	18,4	2	2,3
16	Lepat bugis	17	19,5	68	78,2	2	2,3
17	Laksamana mengamuk	59	67,8	27	31,0	1	1,1
18	Air mata pengantin	61	70,1	26	29,9	0	0,0

The college students had high frequently consumed Riau traditional food namely nasi lemak/lemak rice (10.3%), asam pedas ikan/spicy sour fish (5.7%), gulai ikan patin atau salai/catfish or smoked fish curry (5.7%), tumis belacan/stir-fry belacan (4.6%), and kemojo cake (4.6%). This foods were often consumed by students suspected because this food were still available in several restaurants, stalls, and are often cooked at home. According to Adnan (2017), the process of making nasi lemak (lemak rice), gulai ikan patin/salai (spicy sour fish),

and tumis belacan (stir-fry belacan) is easy and practical so it is often cooked by housewives for consumption on teenagers/college students. Stir-fry belacan is chili paste that is stir-fried or cooked by adding several other ingredients. Making stir-fry belacan aims to add deliciousness to typical Riau Malay dishes. The spicy, sour and salty taste of stir-fry belacan is appetizing and adds to the enjoyment of eating. Kemojo cake is a typical cake from Riau Province which is available in several souvenir places. Currently kemojo cakes are made in various flavors, shapes and sizes. The kemojo cakes sold have various shapes and have undergone a size upgrade, namely they are small so they can be consumed by teenagers who maintain their body image. The small size of the kemojo cake makes it more practical to serve, thus attracting consumers such as college students to consume it.

Lepat bugis snack (78.2%) was one of the snacks that was rarely consumed by college students. The availability of Lepat Bugis cake was usually found in traditional markets, so it be difficult for students to get lepat bugis. The college student never consumed fish floss (81,6%), boulu berendam/halue telur (79,3%), cincalok (77,0%), air mata pengantin (70,1%), and laksamana mengamuk (67,8%). These foods were never consumed by students suspected because the food had less availability on the market and rarely provided in household meals. Beside that, some cakes such as boulu berendam are made specifically for special event, for example Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, weddings and other traditional events (Adnan, 2017).

### 3.3. The Consumption Habbits of Fast Food on College Students

Fast food is food with a processing process that does not require a long time. Fast food is popular food on teenagers, especially college students, because it is easy to find and can be consume under any situation. The frequency of fast food consumption on students is presented in Table 3

Table 3. The Consumption Habbits of Fast Food on College Students

No	Fast Food	Categori					
		Never		Rarely		Frequently	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Fried chicken	3	3,4	50	57,5	34	39,1
2	Hamburger	20	23,0	63	72,4	4	4,6
3	Steak	32	36,8	51	58,6	4	4,6
4	Pizza	28	32,2	58	66,7	1	1,1
5	Sandwich	30	34,5	54	62,1	3	3,4
6	French Fries	5	5,7	69	79,3	13	14,9
7	Nugget	7	8,0	64	73,6	16	18,4
8	Hot dog	60	69,0	27	31,0	0	0,0
9	Instant noodles	4	4,6	66	75,9	17	19,5
10	Instant porridge	43	49,4	43	49,4	1	1,1
11	Sphagetti	39	44,8	47	54,0	1	1,1
12	Dumpling	10	11,5	60	69,0	17	19,5
13	Batagor	8	9,2	61	70,1	18	20,7
14	Empek-empek	10	11,5	70	80,5	7	8,0
15	Cilok	23	26,4	57	65,5	7	8,0
16	Cimol	35	40,2	48	55,2	4	4,6

No	Fast Food	Categori					
		Never		Rarely		Frequently	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
17	Cireng	29	33,3	52	59,8	6	6,9
18	Toast	10	11,5	72	82,8	5	5,7
19	Cakwe	51	58,6	32	36,8	4	4,6
20	Fried Sausage	13	14,9	61	70,1	13	14,9
21	Grilled Sausage	37	42,5	40	46,0	10	11,5
22	Fried tempura	55	63,2	29	33,3	3	3,4
23	Grilled tempura	70	80,5	16	18,4	1	1,1
24	Soup meatballs	6	6,9	64	73,6	17	19,5
25	Fried meatballs	13	14,9	60	69,0	14	16,1
26	Grilled meatballs	12	13,8	60	69,0	15	17,2
27	Soto	9	10,3	74	85,1	4	4,6
28	Bakpau	29	33,3	53	60,9	5	5,7
29	Donuts	7	8,0	70	80,5	10	11,5
30	Creps	18	20,7	62	71,3	7	8,0
31	Kebab	10	11,5	65	74,7	12	13,8
32	Bakwan	5	5,7	62	71,3	20	23,0
33	Fried banana	5	5,7	66	75,9	16	18,4
34	Chocolate banana	8	9,2	64	73,6	15	17,2
35	Risoles	2	2,3	52	59,8	33	37,9
36	Tahu isi	7	8,0	55	63,2	25	28,7
37	Seublak	14	16,1	67	77,0	6	6,9

The college students had high frequently consumed fast food namely fried chicken (39,1%), batagor (20,7%), soup meatball (19,5%), dumpling (19,5%), instant noodle (19,5%). This is in line with research by [Suswanti \(2013\)](#); [Musta'in and Wulansari \(2020\)](#), namely that students more often consume fast food such as instant noodles, meatballs, fried foods, biscuits and chips. This type of food is very easy to find in restaurants, cafes, stalls and street vendors. Beside that, access to getting this food is also easy with the sophistication of technology namely buy online with application in smarthphone. Easy access to fast food makes students often consume fast food.

Nowadays, college students are increasingly interested in consuming fast food. This is shown in the results of [Tarigan's \(2012\)](#) research on students at the Faculty of Medicine, University of North Sumatra, namely 37.9% very often and 33.7% often consume fast food. The same results were also shown in [Widyantara's \(2014\)](#) research, namely that 58.4% of students often consumed fast food and [Kinasih's \(2021\)](#) research showed that 35.1% of students had a high frequency of fast food consumption. Fast food is food high in calories, fat and sodium which has a salty, sweet and savory taste so it is liked by students.

The college students had rarely consumed fast food namely soto (85.1%), toast (82.8%), donuts (80.5%). It is suspected that there are so many new types of bread on the market so donuts and toast are rarely bought.

The college student had never consumed grilled tempura (80.5%), hot dogs (69.0%), and fried tempura (63.2%). The limited availability of this food in the market was thought to be the reason why this food was rarely consumed by teenagers in the last month. Beside that, the price of this food is also not cheap so it was rarely bought and consumed by students.

Based on the data in the table, it can be describe that the college students consume fast food more often than traditional food. This happen suspected because the availability of traditional food in households or on the market was decreasing. This is different from fast food, where availability was increasing, the fast and instant process of making food, as well as the savory and umami flavors of fast food make teenagers really like this food.

Traditional processed food products still have several weaknesses, including not being clean and hygienic, packaging that is still simple, less attractive, uninformative, and limited markets so that traditional processed food products lack selling value and competitiveness (Suter 2014). Different from fast food with an attractive and clean presentation, thus attracting consumers to buy and consume it. This is thought to be one of the reasons college students consume fast food more often than traditional food.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The result of this research showed that the college students had high frequently consumed Riau traditional food namely nasi lemak/lemak rice (10.3%), asam pedas ikan/spicy sour fish (5.7%), gulai ikan patin atau salai/ catfish or smoked fish curry (5.7%), tumis belacan/stir-fry belacan (4.6%), and kemojo cake (4.6%). The college students had high frequently consumed fast food namely fried chicken (39.1%), batagor (20.7%), soup meatball (19.5%), dumplings (19.5%), and instant noodles (19.5%). This research showed that the college students consumed fast food more often than traditional food.

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