

Research article

Revitalization of Traditional Food in Central Java

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Abstract.

This study describes the revitalization of traditional food in Central Java. Primary data in the form of words and phrases that indicate the names of traditional foods in Central Java were collected through interviews, while secondary data – a discourse about traditional food in Central Java – were collected through documentation techniques. The design of this research was qualitative research. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and concluding. The results indicated that the revitalization of traditional Central Javanese food needs to be carried out to maintain the cultural values contained in it. The revitalization could be carried out through several aspects, including aspects of increasing branding, varying the flavor of the products, improving the quality of packaging, increasing the quantity of marketing, and increasing the public understanding regarding the nutritional value and the variety of traditional foods in Central Java.

Keywords: revitalization, traditional food, Central Java, cultural value

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1. Introduction

Millennials are the generation that was born around the year 1981-2000 Epizoa & Schwarzbart via [1]. It means that millennials are the generation which is currently on the peak of their development. Most of millennials have become the leaders of various fields while others are still in the process of finding their identity. According to [2], one of millennials characteristic is familiar with the change of time and technological sophistication. Even making internet an inseparable part of their lives.

This of course makes the millennials became the generation that is most affected by the high flow of globalization. This condition brings various significant changes in the lives of the millennials. One of the changes is the rise of foreign culture. The rise of foreign culture not only implied by the change of understanding of cultural roots, but also result in the shift of mind-set and lifestyle of the millennials. This shift of mind-set and lifestyle also has implications to the selection of diet. Various kinds of foreign food whether they're from Europe or Asia have coloured the millennials culinary world.

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Those variety of food can be found in stall, restaurants, or even marketplace which has become the centre of reference for the millennials to pick their meals. The case also happened in Central Java.

Nowadays, apart from the presence of various foreign restaurants and food stall, there are also a phenomenon which certain local foods are pictured as or collaborating with foreign food. There are also a lot of food producer who localize foreign food by changing some parts of the food with local ingredients. They do this to increase the sale of their product. Foods are a part of culture which represents the characteristic of a nation and region [3].

Foods are created and developed by every group of people or nation. Foods that were born and developed in a region is that own region traditional foods [4]. As part of a cultural product, traditional foods can reflect a community's cultural value. Those foods can also show the social identity of the community in the area. These matters are in line with the opinion of Shri Ahimsa Putra [5], that socio-cultural identity is generally obtained through the process of socialization or learning. Socio-cultural identity can usually be seen through clothes, dialects, or a certain action for example when someone talks, eats, or doing an activity.

Based on that statement, the revitalization of Central Java traditional foods is important to preserve the cultural value and also maintain the socio-cultural identity of the people of Central Java. Revitalizing is a process, a method, and an act of reviving something that was previously less empowered into something important and meaningful [4]. In the context of this study, it is necessary to make an effort to empower various Javanese traditional foods into something important and meaningful among millennials. This needs to be done in order to make Central Java traditional foods a king in the culinary kingdom of the community and also be able to become a globally accepted product.

2. Research Methodology

Data in this research is divided into two, primary and secondary data. Primary data in the form of words and phrases which indicates the names of Central Java traditional foods. Secondary data in the form of discourse about Central Java traditional foods. Primary data was collected by interview and questionnaire method while the secondary data was collected by documentation technique. Data in this research are qualitative. Based on the type of data, this research is a qualitative research. The source of the primary data are the results of the interview and questionnaire of the respondents about the

name of the traditional foods. The secondary data sources are various articles and news from the media related to Javanese traditional food. Data analysis method in this study uses the opinion of Miles and Huberman [7] which are data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion

3. Discussion

Foods in the context of culture relates to the three forms of culture, which are as ideas, activity and as a man-made object. Foods are not just a tool to sustain human lives, but also relates to the norms and rituals, eating etiquettes, ethics, and manners based on the customs. Food is also related to eating pattern and time, when is the right time a food needs to be eaten and how the pattern is. Food also relates to the symbolic role in a social interaction as a form of social expression such as affection, attention, and friendship. Referring to that opinion, the traditional food of Central Java is also related to the norms and rituals, eating patterns, ethics, and the customs of the people of Central Java. The effort to revitalize the traditional food of Central Java is also an effort to revitalize their norms, values, ethics, and customs.

3.1. Traditional Central Java Food based on their type and basic materials

Based on the research, it can be seen that traditional foods have a lot of type and from various ingredients. Based on its type we can categorize it into 4 different kinds, those are, *janganan* (soup), *klethikan* (snack), *nyamikan* (snack), and *jajanan* (snack). *Janganan* (soup) is a traditional food which acts as heavy meal, and usually eaten with rice. Some *Janganan* are, *empis-empis*; *pindang serani*; *gudangan*; *megana*; *garang asem*; *pecel*; *sega lengko*; *bothok ares*; *sate blengong*, *mi ongklok*, *sega pager*, *sega grombyang*, and *brobos (buntil)*. *Klethikan* is a kind of traditional food which has crispy texture, and usually fried. Some *Klethikan* that were found in this research are, *Kembang goyang*, *pothil*, *lanthing*, *tempe kripik*, *sale pisang*, *kripik pisang*, *kontolir* (kripik singkong), *gelang buta*, *cimpring*, *opak*, *emping*, *gendar*, *slondhok*, *kaoya*, *jipang*, and *brondong*. Most of those *Klethikan* are originally salty and sometimes sweet. *Nyamikan* is a type of snacks that are usually served on a certain event or if there are guests in the house. *Nyamikan* has a lot of flavor, shape, and texture. Some *Nyamikan* that were found in this research are, *Dumbeg*, *horog-horog*, *gethuk*, *lemet*, *lenthos*, *lolos*, *alu-alu*, *gobet*, *growol*, *gemblong*, *bajingan*, *ndolo-ndolo*, and *gablog*. Most *Nyamikan*

are sweet and chewy. Other than those, there is also *Jajanan*. Some of them that were found in this research are, *ketan bubuk*, *cenil*, *es jati*, *klepon*, *gemblong*, *pipis*, *tiwul*, *cothot*, *lupis*, *blendung*, and *moco wijen*. *Jajanan* are usually sold in the market, which is also why it is called Market Snacks. This type of traditional food is usually dominated with sweet flavor. Generally not every types of traditional foods are sold in the market, only some of them do and being called *Jajanan Pasar*.

The diversity of Central Java traditional food shows how wealthy the local community resource is. It is also pictured by the ingredients used to make those foods that have become the identity of the people itself. The most used basic ingredients are, sticky rice flour, rice flour, wheat flour, cassava, sweet potato, and corn. These ingredients are easily found in the Java region especially Central Java. Cassava and sweet potato are some of the staple food eaten by the Javanese that are then underwent various modification throughout the parts of Central Java. The domination of cassava as a basic ingredients for traditional food that were found in this research shows that it exist throughout the east up to the west side of Central Java. In addition, Central Java geographic conditions make cassava a thriving food ingredient. Cassava is also pretty cheap that it is used in a lot of traditional food as a basic ingredients. Besides being influential in the processing process, the local wisdom of the people in Central Java also greatly influences the selection of the traditional foods basic ingredients. Here are some example of traditional food that uses cassava as its basic ingredients. *gethuk gotri*, *gethuk lindri*, *gethuk goreng*, *gethuk trio*, *gethuk karet*, *gethuk bokong*. There are also *tiwul*, *combro*, *growol*, *sredeg*, *ndolo-ndolo*, and *cemplon*.

Here are some *klethikan* that uses cassava as its basic ingredients, *pothil*, *gelang buta*, *lanthing*, *slondhok*, *samiyer*, *opak*, *cimpring*, *geblegan* and *kendhalen*. Next basic ingredient is sticky rice flour. Some traditional food that uses rice and sticky rice flour as its basic ingredients are, *pipis*, *klepon*, *lolos*, *lupis*, *moco wijen*, *alu-alu*, *iwel-iwel*, *dumbeg*, *lepet kuningan*, and *jadah*. Next one, Based on the research, there were also found some traditional food that use rice flour, they are, *gablog*, *bubur candil*, *apem*, *nagasari*, *pasung*, *dumbeg*, *putu mayang*, and *klepon*. Aside from that some foods that use wheat flour are, *horog-horog*, *ganjelrel*, *kembang goyang*, and *orog-orog*. Lastly here are the traditional foods which use corn as its basic ingredient, *marning*, *sega jagung*, *blendhung*, and *emping jagung* (corn flakes). Although it is not used as much as the other basic ingredients, banana is also one of the basic ingredient of some Central Java traditional food. Some of the food that has banana as its basic ingredient are, *sael pisang*, *kripik pisang* (banana chips), and *gethuk pisang*. Aside from using the basic

ingredients, traditional foods also use various complementary spices and flavourings that came from the local crops.

The diversity of basic ingredients also reflects the biological wealth of Central Java people. The fertile and diverse landscape that produce a variety of commodities does not constrict the knowledge of Central Java people to process their crops into traditional foods. On the contrary with the diversity of commodities, the culinary processing mastery of Central Java people wrapped with their local wisdom is getting richer. Based on that, it can be interpreted that their various traditional foods are a reflection of the knowledge and local wisdom of Central Java People. This in lines with the idea of Rahman [9] that culinary is a culture product resulted from human creativity. Culinary can transform into a nation's identity. Every nation has their own symbol to picture their nationalism. It means that foods can also be a part of a nation's identity

3.2. The Revitalization of Central Java Traditional Foods

Based on the research, a lot of traditional food to this day can be found easily but most of them are hard to be found. The difficulty of finding these traditional foods can be caused by the lack of mass production of the said food. Aside from that, the distributing process of the traditional foods is very limited. These limited distribution cause the disappearance of the part of Central Java people identity. That is why the revitalization of Central Java traditional foods is needed. This revitalization can also become an important part in preserving the biodiversity that exist in Central Java.

Of the several types of Central Java traditional food found in this study, there are still a lot which the millennials don't know about. Their unknowability was not caused by their ignorance, but because of the lack of information about the said traditional food. The lack of these traditional food vendor and the rise of digital food vendor also limit their knowledge of some Central Java traditional foods. The branding of these foods became an important part of this revitalization. Through a good, up-to-date, and easy to remember branding, traditional food will be known.

Various recorded Central Java traditional food, especially *Klethikan* are still dominated by its original taste. It means that most of them still don't have the flavour which people might like. For example, *Emping Jagung*, The finding shows that it only has 1 flavour, the original flavour. Looking at its texture and ingredients, it can be sold with other various flavour such as, balado; various spicy level; roasted beef; black pepper; and others. The use of other seasoning and flavour variants will allow *emping jagung* to rise.

These days in the culinary world, the improvements of packaging quality became one of the reason to increase a food's popularity. Culinary seeker might be interested by a good and eye-catching packaging, even if they haven't tasted the food. But unfortunately, this thing hasn't happened to Central Java traditional food. The packaging of the traditional food is still very simple and most of the time looks too bland. This will of course impact the sale of the product which is very ordinary. The improvement of packaging quality should also go hand in hand with the improvement of the food quality and endurance itself. In the effort of revitalizing traditional food, there needs to be a packaging quality improvement so that the food itself looks hygienic and good.

So far, the marketing of traditional food in Central Java still uses traditional method. It means that they haven't used digital technology that is currently booming. The research team's efforts to find traditional Central Javanese food through the marketplace got a very low result. Central Java traditional food that were found in the marketplace are still low in number. Some of the food that were found are *kripik singkong*, *mino*, *Jenang*, *dodol*, *carang madu*, *kripik mlinjo*, and *lanthing*. If we compare it with the traditional foods from West Java, then Central Java's are still got left out in the marketplace. Because of that, the next revitalization effort is improving the quality of the marketing. The marketing that is still traditional needs to be changed into something more modern and digital based, for example through the marketplace. This will not only increase the item sale but also brings a lot of positivity to the food name itself.

The people's understanding about nutritional value and the diversity of Central Java traditional food are is also very minimum. This is proven by the answer of the respondent which stated that they would eat traditional food as a second choice after modern food. There are still a lot of respondent that still don't understand how diverse Central Java traditional food is. It is proven by the fact there are a lot of them that still don't know the name of the traditional foods, especially the millennials respondent. Apart from that they also think that traditional foods lack nutrition because its quality is pretty average. This matter of course become one of the challenge in revitalizing the traditional food itself. Through a good packaging and good knowledge of the nutritional value that is stated on the package, consumer will certainly prefer traditional food over modern one. Because of that, the last revitalization effort is to increase the people's understanding about nutritional value and the diversity of Central Java traditional foods.

4. Conclusion

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that there are four types of traditional food in Central Java, *janganan* (soup), *klethikan* (snack), *nyamikan* (snack), and *jajanan* (snack). All four of those traditional food came from various basic ingredients. The diversity of the basic ingredients shows the vastness of Central Java biodiversity. Opinion of [10], that the richness of nature and the different socio-cultural life of the people was the cause of the diversity in culinary.

The processing of the various basic ingredients it self reflects the richness of Central Java local wisdom. The presence of those foods also reflects the identity and knowledge of Central Java people. Based on that, the revitalization of traditional food in Central Java is also in line with the revitalization of identity, local wisdom and knowledge of Central Java People. Then, the revitalization effort can be done through some aspects, such as, Improvement of branding, packaging quality, variety of seasoning, marketing quality, and people's understanding about the nutritional value of Central Java traditional foods.

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