



WILL TRADITIONAL FOOD SURVIVE THE TRENDS? INVESTIGATING LOMBOK YOUNG GENERATIONS CONSUMPTION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the consumption patterns of traditional Sasak cuisine among Generation Z in Lombok, Indonesia, amid the influence of modern food trends. Using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with eight participants aged 11–26, the research reveals a duality in food preferences. While traditional dishes like Pelecing Kangkong, Ayam pelecingan, Ayam Taliwang remain common at home due to parental influence, Gen Z increasingly favors modern, convenient, and trendy foods outside the household. Sensory preferences, time constraints, and social influences drive this shift, along with a declining interest in learning traditional cooking skills. However, many young people still express cultural pride in Sasak cuisine, suggesting opportunities for revitalization. The study highlights the need for adaptation through fusion, media promotion, and educational programs to sustain culinary heritage. Traditional food must evolve to align with Gen Z's lifestyles, emphasizing identity, convenience, and health to remain relevant in a globalized food landscape

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1. INTRODUCTION

As global culinary trends progressively influence local food cultures, traditional cuisines are at significant danger of being eclipsed, especially among younger generations. The inclination to choose contemporary, processed, and rapid meals over traditional culinary methods has been well documented, demonstrating a change in consumption patterns that might threaten the sustainability of conventional food practices (Lami et al. 2023). This transition underscores a notable cultural phenomenon in which convenience and globalization take priority over cultural legacy, resulting in the degradation of traditional culinary knowledge and practices in several areas (Muhammad Muzhaffar Mohd Aris et al. 2022; Luppens and Power 2018).

Lombok, Indonesia, renowned for its rich culinary legacy, offers a unique backdrop for examining traditional food consumption throughout this generational transition. Despite the attractiveness of contemporary culinary trends, traditional meals remain significant in the everyday lives of several residents, particularly among certain demographic segments. Young people in Lombok have a dual connection with food, characterized by an integration of contemporary influences and a growing appreciation for their ancient culinary traditions. The existence of traditional dishes like "Ayam Taliwang" and "Sate Rembiga" indicates that these cultural meals are not only historical treasures but are actively eaten, although to differing extents (Hanemaayer et al. 2020; Chopera et al. 2022).

Traditional food intake is crucial not only for nourishment but also for the preservation of cultural identities and sustainable practices (Muhammad Muzhaffar Mohd Aris et al. 2022). Traditional foods often include local histories, customs, and sustainable agriculture techniques essential for ecological equilibrium and community well-being. Participation in traditional culinary traditions cultivates a feeling of belonging and collective identity among

community members, especially in the context of globalization (McEachern et al. 2022; Yang et al. 2023). The consumption of these meals is not only a culinary preference but a kind of cultural affirmation that reinforces communal ties and preserves cultural heritage.

Despite its resilience, a significant study vacuum remains about how younger generations in Lombok manage their relationship with traditional foods in the face of modern dietary patterns. Despite extensive research on traditional food consumption across many worldwide settings, there is a limitation of particular information about Lombok's young and their involvement in traditional culinary practices (Gichunge, Somerset, and Harris 2016; Hanemaayer et al. 2020). Comprehending this local dynamic may clarify how cultural preservation may be attained amongst modernity, and how educational programs can be structured to foster traditional cuisine appreciation among the young (Islam et al. 2016). Examining this nuanced interplay has significance for wider debates on food sovereignty, health, and cultural resilience in more globalized cultures.

The combination of contemporary culinary techniques with a rich traditional food history in Lombok presents a compelling study. Examining the eating habits of younger generations in this context will provide significant insights on the sustainability of traditional foods amid changing global dynamics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional Food

Traditional cuisine comprises culinary traditions and recipes rooted in the historical and cultural history of a community, often transmitted throughout generations. These cuisines are generally crafted from local resources and embody the beliefs, identity, and lifestyle of those who create and consume them. For example, the robust stews common in Eastern European cuisine and the complexly flavored curries of South Asia both nourish and convey a community's history and contemporary stories. Cerjak et al. assert that traditional cuisine elicits a profound emotional reaction from customers, fostering a feeling of connection and identity associated with their cultural background (Cerjak et al. 2014). This emotional connection is further reinforced by the idea that traditional meals provide a concrete link to one's heritage and are essential for preserving cultural continuity among communities (Monaco et al. 2005).

The importance of traditional cuisine beyond basic nourishment; it is vital for cultural preservation and nutritional well-being. Numerous traditional dishes are prepared using whole, locally obtained products and established cooking methods, often yielding healthier meals than contemporary processed options (Muhammad Muzhaffar Mohd Aris et al. 2022). Research demonstrates that traditional foods often provide elevated quantities of essential nutrients, enhancing dietary health outcomes, especially among First Nation populations (McAuley and Knopper 2011). Moreover, traditional culinary traditions often include communal assemblies, religious ceremonies, and seasonal celebrations, therefore reinforcing familial connections and community solidarity (Jernigan et al. 2023). Hanemaayer et al. emphasize that traditional meals may cultivate a profound feeling of community, especially among First Nations groups, where food sharing is essential to cultural traditions (Hanemaayer et al. 2020).

Traditional food systems, notwithstanding their significance, face several obstacles in the contemporary sociocultural environment. The processes of globalization and industrial agricultural methods have resulted in a notable uniformity in diets, mostly favoring quick and easy food choices. This tendency has led to a decrease in both the knowledge and practice of cooking traditional meals, especially among younger generations, who are more vulnerable to the appeal of contemporary fast food (Luppens and Power 2018). Neufeld et al. demonstrate that urbanization has reduced the accessibility of traditional cooking conditions, consequently hindering the transmission of culinary skills (Neufeld, Richmond, and Centre 2017). Moreover, economic pressures combined with climate change jeopardize local food sovereignty and the sustainability of traditional food systems, since smaller-scale farmers often contend with the cost competitiveness of industrial models (Nyholm, Walch, and Redmond 2024).

Furthermore, environmental degradation—manifested via climate change and soil depletion—impacts the accessibility of components essential to traditional recipes (Maudrie et al. 2021). According to Jernigan et al., Indigenous food systems are especially susceptible, yet reviving these traditions may markedly improve community health and food security by reestablishing connections to traditional foodways (Jernigan et al. 2023). The concept of food sovereignty is crucial, since it enables communities to retain control over their food systems and cultural identity amidst foreign pressures (Nikolaus et al. 2022).

In summary, traditional cuisine has substantial cultural, nutritional, and ecological importance. It not only cultivates community connections and cultural heritage but also enhances public health and sustainability. The preservation of traditional culinary traditions is jeopardized by modernity and globalization, requiring deliberate initiatives in education, legislative advocacy, and community involvement to rejuvenate and maintain these essential food systems for future generations.



Modernization as Impact of Globalization

Globalization profoundly impacts modernization, resulting in transformational changes to traditional food supply networks and consumer behaviors. Globalization promotes economic integration and technical progress, leading to dependence on industrialized agriculture that often neglects local customs and biodiversity. This industrialization is characterized by an emphasis on high-yield crops and technology, which, while increasing production, often sidelines local agricultural expertise and undermines the cultural importance of traditional food systems (Bălan et al. 2022). Bălan et al. assert that ensuring food security requires a deliberate consumption strategy that fosters sustainable behaviors and resource efficiency (Bălan et al. 2022). Contemporary trends in global food systems encourage similar production techniques and standardization, risking ecological and cultural integrity in areas unable to compete with bigger, industrialized organizations (Jagtap et al. 2022).

The modernization of supply chains has transformed the traditional food environment, which was traditionally defined by regional production and community involvement. Globalization fosters linked logistical networks, enhancing food accessibility and reducing costs, hence challenging local farmers and producers against cheaper, frequently processed alternatives (Madruga et al. 2022). The transition to expedited and more uniform food production processes has led to a diminished variety of food sources. The use of ultra-processed foods has markedly risen, especially in areas like the UK, where consumption trends reveal a clear transition towards convenience, compromising conventional dietary habits (Madruga et al. 2022). This tendency is corroborated by evidence suggesting that traditional foods are progressively being eclipsed by the swift embrace of Western diets, prompting apprehensions over the erosion of culinary heritage and its related cultural identity (Bălan et al. 2022).

As civilizations urbanize, consumption patterns change in conjunction with significant lifestyle alterations. Busy lives generate a significant demand for ready-to-eat meals, thus intensifying the demise of traditional cooking habits. This generational transition compromises the preservation of household culinary expertise since a diminishing number of persons transmit traditional recipes (Bălan et al. 2022). There is an increasing acknowledgment of the significance of culinary legacy, resulting in initiatives focused on safeguarding traditional food systems. Initiatives like Slow Food and farm-to-table eating aim to revitalize interest in local foods and sustainable practices by linking customers to the origins of their food (Fodor, Vasa, and Popovics 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed weaknesses in global food supply networks, underscoring the need for diversity and resilience in food production systems (Li and Yang 2024).

Overall, whereas globalization and modernization provide prospects for economic advancement and efficiency, they also introduce considerable challenges to conventional food systems and practices. The need to adhere to global norms often undermines the cultural diversity inherent in local culinary traditions. It is essential to reconcile the benefits of globalization with the need of safeguarding culinary heritage and promoting local farming methods to retain cultural identity and guarantee food security (Lopez-Merino, Zeppini, and Lazaric 2024). A systematic strategy is necessary that integrates the advantages of technology while preserving the fragile ecosystems and cultural narratives foundational to traditional food use.

Lombok Traditional Food

Lombok, an island in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, has a culinary culture that embodies the history of the Sasak people. This distinctive cuisine is defined by its robust tastes and essential link to the island's nature and history. The culinary identity of Lombok has been molded by local agriculture, trading patterns, and cultural contacts with neighboring areas, while also integrating larger Indonesian influences (Dewi and Sulisty 2024; Lestari and Yusra 2022). Lombok's gastronomic offerings are receiving acclaim, augmenting the island's eco-tourism prospects via its culinary culture and delivering immersive experiences for tourists (Pranata and Firmansyah 2023).

A hallmark of Lombok's traditional cuisine is its significant use of spices, particularly chili, which highlights its reputation for spiciness (S M Rahayu et al. 2022; Ihwan, Atika, and Nitami 2024). The term "Lombok" translates to "chili" in the Sasak language, highlighting the significance of this item in regional cuisine. Essential taste constituents include garlic, turmeric, shallots, galangal, and terasi (fermented shrimp paste), each contributing to the intricate flavors of many cuisines (S M Rahayu et al. 2022). Coconut milk is often used to mitigate spiciness, establishing a harmonic equilibrium, while fresh herbs like lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves augment the fragrant characteristics distinctive to Lombok cuisine (Jupri et al. 2025).

Ayam Taliwang is particularly esteemed among Lombok's distinguished foods. This grilled chicken meal, originating from Taliwang village, is distinguished by its piquant marinade, including a mixture of indigenous spices, lime juice, and fresh herbs, exemplifying the culinary methods intrinsic to Sasak culture (Rizkiyah, Nurhayati, and Ferdianto 2023). Additional delicacies like Plecing Kangkung, a lively water spinach salad with sambal, and Beberuk Terong, a piquant eggplant salad, illustrate the island's dedication to fresh, locally produced ingredients (Nurhayati,

Saufi, and Rinuastuti 2022). These foods encapsulate the narratives and customs of the region, mirroring communal values and gastronomic history.

Sate Rembiga, another esteemed dish, exemplifies Lombok's affinity for meat-centric cuisine. In contrast to its Javanese equivalents that often use sweet soy sauce, Sate Rembiga is characterized by a robust marination with spices, yielding a complex taste profile (Susianti and Affandi 2024). The island's fishing culture enhances its culinary repertoire, providing a diverse array of seafood skillfully cooked and flavored with traditional sambals. The coastal influence, together with Lombok's agricultural richness, features rice as a staple, accompanied by several lauk-pauk (side dishes) that promote community eating (T. I. Rahayu et al. 2023; Widani and Pramudia 2024).

The communal nature of Lombok's cuisine exemplifies Sasak hospitality, with food acting as a manifestation of culture, connection, and celebration (Dewi and Sulisty 2024; Sukenti et al. 2022a). Conventional presentations on big platters or banana leaves during gatherings emphasize a cultural appreciation for communal meal experiences that enhance social connections (Susianti and Affandi 2024; Widani and Pramudia 2024). Hospitality encompasses not just everyday meals but also traditional occasions, such as weddings (Selarian), when special dishes commemorate key life changes (Sukenti et al. 2022b; Rizkiyah, Nurhayati, and Ferdianto 2023).

The sustainability of Lombok's food is founded on its dependence on fresh, seasonal products, with several inhabitants adhering to traditional agricultural and culinary practices (S M Rahayu et al. 2022). This relationship with the land enhances food security while preserving the traditional values of the Sasak people (Slamet M Rahayu et al. 2023). Preserving biodiversity and intergenerational culinary expertise is crucial for maintaining culinary authenticity and improving economic sustainability as culinary tourism expands (Pranata and Firmansyah 2023; Sukenti et al. 2022b).

In summary, Lombok's gastronomic scene embodies its cultural richness, indigenous resources, and communal connections. Every dish, from the piquant Ayam Taliwang to the invigorating Plecing Kangkung, embodies the quintessence of Sasak tradition and illustrates the island's dynamic culinary culture. With the growing interest in regional Indonesian cuisines, Lombok emerges as a notable destination for its distinctive tastes and culturally rich tales (Dewi and Sulisty 2024; Lestari and Yusra 2022; Sukenti et al. 2022b).

Role of Younger Generations in Traditional Food Consumption

Generation Z (Gen Z), comprising individuals born approximately between 1997 and 2012, exhibits a dynamic and evolving relationship with traditional food. As the first generation to grow up in a fully digital environment, Gen Z's consumption patterns are influenced by various factors, including lifestyle changes and cultural pressures. Understanding this cohort's interaction with traditional foods is essential due to their potential to influence market trends and food heritage.

On one hand, Gen Z is increasingly gravitating towards convenience and fast-food options, often viewed as more aligned with their busy lifestyles. This shift is supported by research indicating that younger consumers tend to favor convenience foods over traditional ones due to time constraints and a preference for quick dining experiences (Lami et al. 2023). Findings suggest that urban living conditions and the scarcity of time contribute to a lower frequency of traditional food consumption among younger generations (Lami et al. 2023). Additionally, social media plays a significant role in shaping Gen Z's food preferences, with platforms like Instagram fostering trends that prioritize aesthetic presentation over cultural significance (Hastiningsih and Sari 2023).

Conversely, a substantial segment of Gen Z actively seeks to reconnect with traditional foods, particularly when these foods align with their values of health, sustainability, and cultural authenticity. Many members of this generation exhibit a strong desire for organic or locally sourced foods, recognizing traditional dishes as elements of cultural identity that require preservation (Chen and Lin 2024; Muhammad M M Aris et al. 2022). The emotional connection fostered by nostalgia regarding traditional foods has been shown to enhance their purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers, reinforcing the positive perceptions tied to authenticity (Chen and Lin 2024). Furthermore, the rise of social media has enabled a resurgence of interest in traditional recipes, as users share tutorials and challenges that promote cultural cuisine (Hastiningsih and Sari 2023).

As the custodians of culinary heritage, Gen Z's engagement with traditional foods is pivotal. The responsibility of preserving and continuing traditional food practices increasingly falls on this demographic as older generations age (D'Andrea and D'Ulizia 2023). Should Gen Z become disconnected from these foodways, there is a risk of erasing valuable culinary traditions and recipes that form an integral part of cultural heritage (D'Andrea and D'Ulizia 2023). Understanding their consumption habits allows stakeholders, such as educators, chefs, and cultural organizations, to design relevant programs that can enhance engagement with traditional foods (Fodor, Vasa, and Popovics 2024).

Overall, Gen Z's influence on traditional food consumption is multifaceted, presenting both challenges and opportunities for the preservation of culinary practices. Their dual inclination towards convenience and a renewed appreciation for cultural authenticity necessitates innovative approaches to food marketing and education. By tapping



into Gen Z's values and leveraging their affinity for digital storytelling, it is possible to foster a sustainable relationship with traditional culinary heritage that resonates with contemporary consumer trends.

3. METHODS

The research used a qualitative methodology to investigate the consumption of traditional food among Lombok younger generations. The study especially focuses on people aged 11 to 26 who originally from Lombok in. Due to the absence of a sample frame, the research opts for nonprobability sampling, which does not provide an equal opportunity for selection; hence, the study's results cannot be generalized (Lohr 2021). The sampling approaches comprise of purposive a sampling method. Purposive sampling is used to choose participants based on established criteria. The researchers do not establish a predetermined sample size, instead it to develop spontaneously via data saturation. The research included interviews with eight (8) participants, using a semi-structured style to investigate the consumption of the young generations for Lombok Traditional Food.

Table 1. Profile of Participant

No	Informant	Age	Gender	District
1	Informant 1	21	male	Praya, Central Lombok
2	Informant 2	20	male	Mataram
3	Informant 3	19	male	Central Lombok
4	Informant 4	21	male	Mataram
5	Informant 5	20	female	Gerung, west lombok
6	Informant 6	22	female	Mataram
7	Informant 7	20	Female	Selong East Lombok
8	Informant 8	19	male	North Lombok

Conducting interviews at Politeknik Pariwisata Lombok, where a significant number of students fulfill the study's requirements, will guarantee that the data collection is both pertinent and specific. Moreover, the incorporation of students from other district in Lombok enriches the richness of the study's sample. The semi-structured interviews provide essential insights, and the research instrument, consisting of a series of questions, is validated by experts to confirm its face validity. Subsequent to the interviews, the data is transcribed and thematically analyzed using N-Vivo for data organization.

Upon analysis, a thorough collection of significant notes was compiled, distilled into subthemes, and categorized under 6 principal themes, indicating that the data has achieved saturation. Saturation transpires when no more codes or themes arise, indicating the end of the interview procedure. The study indicates that the tenth and eleventh informants produced no new codes, hence affirming the lack of supplementary themes pertinent to the research aims (Braun and Clarke 2021). This outcome highlights the meticulousness of the data gathering method and the strength of the conclusions, as seen in the following image. The research attains a thorough comprehension of the principal variables corresponding to its aims.

Table 2. Significant notes, subthemes (codes), and themes

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Important Notes
1. Family Influence on Home Consumption	Role of Parents in Meal Preparation	Most participants still live with their parents; meals are mainly prepared by mothers or elder family members.
	Passive Role in Cooking	Gen Z rarely cooks traditional dishes themselves; participation is infrequent and mostly supportive.
	Culinary Knowledge Transfer	Home remains a primary space for passing on food culture, but lack of cooking practice may hinder knowledge transmission.
2. Sensory Preferences and Flavor Attachment	Preference for Spicy and Savory Flavors	Sasak food is favored for its spiciness, savoriness, and richness due to terasi (fermented shrimp paste).
	Cultural Identity Through Taste	Taste reflects cultural affiliation and is central to enjoyment and food choices.
	Limitations for Mild-Flavored Dishes	Traditional dishes lacking bold sensory profiles may be less appealing to Gen Z.
3. Selective Acceptance and Aversion	Aversion to Bitter or Raw Ingredients	Dishes like <i>beberoq</i> are disliked for their bitterness or raw texture; not well accepted without early exposure.

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Important Notes
	Generational Taste Differences	Gen Z preferences differ from older generations, reflecting a narrowing acceptance of traditional flavor profiles.
	Risk of Marginalization	Without regular exposure, certain traditional dishes may fade from the diet.
4. Contemporary Choices Outside the Home	Shift to Modern, Globalized Food	Outside the home, Gen Z prefers modern snacks, fast food, or healthier fusion dishes (e.g., <i>ayam geprek</i> , <i>bakso</i>).
	Influence of Social Media and Trendy Food	Choices are often influenced by what's popular online; social context shapes eating behavior.
	Duality in Eating Behavior	Traditional food is linked to home and family; modern food symbolizes independence and personal choice.
5. Cultural and Ceremonial Importance	Traditional Food in Rituals	Traditional dishes like <i>gule lemak</i> , <i>poteng</i> , and <i>sate pusut</i> are served during weddings, <i>begawai</i> , and holidays.
	Complexity Limits Daily Use	Some dishes are seen as "ribet" (too complex) for daily preparation; often cooked only during events.
	Symbolic Role in Identity	Food used in ceremonies reinforces its role as cultural heritage.
6. Adaptation and Innovation Needs	Call for Modernization and Fusion	Suggestions include fusing traditional and modern styles to make dishes more appealing to youth.
	Promotion and Media Integration	Social media, packaging, and presentation enhancements are seen as key to increasing visibility and acceptance of traditional dishes.
	Balancing Tradition and Modernity	Gen Z desires to preserve tradition but in formats that fit contemporary lifestyles and aesthetic sensibilities.

The study employs member checking, a process of validating results with interviewed participants, to enhance the data's credibility. Furthermore, prior to the definitive publication of results, the authors participate in collaborative analysis, so augmenting the research process via an additional layer of verification (Adler 2022; Ahmed 2024).

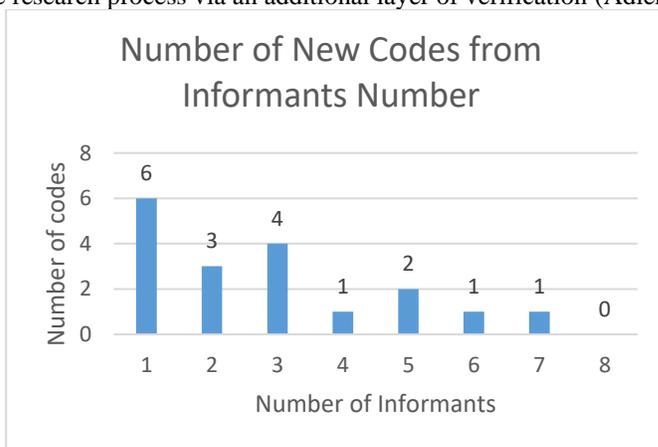


Figure 1. Quantity of novel codes produced from the data analysis

Table 3. Main Interview Questions

NO	Main Questions
1	How do you eat in daily?
2	What is your daily menu?
3	Which one do you prefer the local traditional food or the foreign food?
4	How do you get the traditional food fest?



4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The younger generation in Lombok, particularly those belonging to Gen Z (ages 19–22), displays a nuanced and evolving relationship with traditional Sasak cuisine. Their consumption patterns are shaped by a mix of familial influence, personal taste preferences, modern lifestyle shifts, and cultural awareness. While most still live with their parents and are often served traditional dishes at home, their choices when dining outside increasingly reflect the pull of global food trends and convenience.

1. The Impact of Family on Household Consumption

In Lombok, the family unit significantly influences the food habits of Gen Z, especially regarding the consumption of traditional Sasak cuisine. The majority of participants reside with their parents and indicated that meal preparation is primarily conducted by family members, particularly mothers. Informant 1 indicated that they typically consume meals prepared at home, either by their mother or other family members. This domestic arrangement facilitates regular exposure to traditional dishes like kelaq manis, nasi balap, and pelecing kangkung, establishing the home as a central location for the transfer of culinary knowledge and the continuity of culture.

The dependence on family for meal preparation indicates that younger individuals may not be fully involved in the cooking of traditional dishes themselves. Informants 6 and 8 indicated that their assistance is typically infrequent and often guided by the actions of older family members. This approach preserves tradition via family practices, yet it raises concerns regarding the sustainability of these practices as this generation attains independence. Active engagement in cooking is essential to ensure the comprehensive transmission of knowledge regarding the preparation of traditional dishes.

2. Sensory Preferences and Flavor Affinity

The taste and flavor of traditional Sasak food are significant motivators for consumption. Participants highlighted the unique attractiveness of dishes characterized by spiciness, savoriness, and a richness derived from terasi (fermented shrimp paste), reflecting wider regional preferences. Informant 1 indicated that Sasak food is favored due to its superior taste, characterized as more delicious, savory, and spicy. Informants 2 and 4 indicated a strong preference for spicy dishes, specifically sate rembige and pelecing kangkung. The statements indicate a profound sensory relationship with traditional food, emphasizing its significance beyond mere sustenance to include pleasure and cultural identity.

These preferences illustrate the essential influence of local flavor profiles on food selection. The appreciation for umami and spiced dishes, influenced by early experiences and cultural practices, is fundamental to the preservation of traditional cuisine. Taste in this generation serves as both a personal preference and a manifestation of cultural affiliation. Nevertheless, these flavor-oriented preferences may pose difficulties for traditional dishes that do not possess similarly pronounced sensory characteristics.

3. Selective Acceptance and Rejection of Specific Dishes

While there is a general appreciation for traditional cuisine, the data indicate that Gen Z demonstrates selectivity in their food choices, specifically avoiding dishes that contain bitter or raw ingredients. Informants 5 and 9 expressed discomfort with beberoq, noting that the inclusion of bitter leaves or raw vegetables was unappealing. This selective acceptance indicates a departure from previous generations, who may exhibit a wider tolerance for traditional ingredients and flavors developed through habitual consumption.

The rejection of specific dishes is likely influenced by diminished familiarity and evolving taste preferences shaped by contemporary eating habits. Dishes necessitating an acquired taste, particularly those characterized by bitter or fibrous textures, are more frequently avoided unless consistently presented during childhood. The observed generational shift indicates that, without deliberate exposure or adaptation, certain traditional foods may become marginalized among younger individuals.

4. Contemporary Dietary Selections Beyond the Home

Traditional food continues to prevail within the household; however, outside the home, Generation Z increasingly favors modern or globalized food options. Informant 3 indicated a preference for healthier or trendier foods when dining out, including modern snacks, fusion dishes, or items highlighted on social media. Some individuals demonstrated a willingness to explore unfamiliar foods in the absence of parental oversight, highlighting a distinct difference between eating behaviors at home and those exhibited independently.

This duality indicates that traditional food is linked to family and cultural heritage, whereas modern food corresponds to personal expression, convenience, and exploration. Informants often indicated a preference for dishes such as ayam geprek, bakso, and fast food in social contexts. The distinction between traditional and contemporary

food consumption highlights the necessity of integrating traditional foods into modern formats and platforms, particularly those aimed at younger audiences.

Meanwhile, in cultural setting, Traditional Sasak foods maintain a crucial ceremonial function among Gen Z, especially during family gatherings and religious or cultural rituals. Multiple participants indicated that they reserve specific dishes for special occasions, including weddings, begawe, or Islamic holidays. Informant 7 noted that traditional dishes are frequently considered “too complicated to prepare” for everyday consumption, leading to their reservation for communal occasions. This underscores the role of food as a representation of heritage and identity in ceremonial settings.

These sporadic consumption patterns reinforce the cultural significance of traditional dishes, despite a potential decrease in their regular availability. Foods like gule lemak, poteng, and sate pusut are identified as integral components of festive meals, highlighting their ongoing significance in ritual practices. The situational aspect of their preparation raises concerns regarding long-term culinary familiarity, as these dishes may become less recognized outside of formal gatherings if not maintained through informal, everyday practices.

5. The Need for Adaptation and Innovation

Despite changing habits, numerous Gen Z informants articulated a commitment to maintaining Sasak culinary traditions via innovative adaptation. Informant 6 emphasized the need for greater promotion of traditional foods to improve their visibility, whereas Informant 3 proposed the modernization of these foods through fusion concepts to enhance their appeal. These concepts indicate a recognition that traditional foods need to adapt to maintain significance in an evolving food environment.

Participants emphasized the necessity of aligning traditional food with contemporary health trends and aesthetic standards. It has been suggested that updated packaging, enhanced presentation, and the incorporation of digital media may facilitate the reintegration of traditional dishes into youth culture. These adaptation efforts suggest that Generation Z does not completely dismiss tradition, but rather aims to reinterpret it in alignment with their lifestyle. These viewpoints present viable avenues for the preservation of culinary traditions via innovation and targeted cultural marketing strategies.

Overall, traditional dishes such as **pelecing kangkung**, **ayam taliwang**, **nasi balap**, and **bebalung** are still widely consumed, largely because they are cooked by their parents or family members. The flavor profile of Sasak food—characterized by **spiciness, savory depth, and the use of terasi (fermented shrimp paste)**—remains a strong point of attraction for many. Informants commonly express that they enjoy Sasak dishes because they are “lebih enak, pedas, dan gurih,” suggesting a deep sensory appreciation rooted in familiarity and local taste preferences. However, this connection to traditional food tends to weaken outside of the home. When eating out or visiting urban centers like Mataram, many Gen Z individuals prefer modern or fusion options, including **bakso**, **ayam geprek**, **nasi goreng**, or **fast food chains like KFC**. This shift is often driven by curiosity, dietary awareness (such as opting for low-calorie meals), and convenience. Additionally, some traditional dishes are seen as “ribet” (complicated) or difficult to prepare, making them less accessible for everyday consumption by busy young people.

Certain dishes, particularly those using raw or bitter ingredients—such as **beberog** made with raw eggplant or **daun pahit**—are often disliked due to their texture or unfamiliar taste. On the other hand, more protein-rich and spicy dishes such as **sate rembiga**, **bebalung**, and **ayam plecing** remain popular, even gaining attention from younger consumers when presented in a modern context or at traditional ceremonies.

Cultural attachment still plays a role in shaping food preferences. Many young people view Sasak food as part of their **cultural identity**, expressing pride in dishes that represent their heritage. However, they also recognize the need for **adaptation and innovation**, suggesting that traditional food should be promoted more actively, fused with modern styles, and made more appealing to younger audiences through media and presentation.

In conclusion, the consumption of traditional Lombok food among Gen Z is **transitional**—anchored in familial and cultural roots but increasingly influenced by modern food trends, health awareness, and urban exposure. While there is a real risk of disconnection, the younger generation also holds the key to revitalizing traditional food through creative engagement, culinary innovation, and digital promotion. If traditional Sasak cuisine is to survive and flourish, it must evolve in ways that resonate with the values and lifestyles of this emerging generation.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal a nuanced relationship between Gen Z in Lombok and traditional Sasak cuisine, echoing patterns observed in broader literature while also offering locally grounded insights. One of the most prominent findings is that traditional food remains a staple in the household context. Young people continue to consume dishes such as *pelecing kangkung*, *ayam taliwang*, and *bebalung*, largely because these meals are still prepared by parents or older family members. This aligns with Cerjak et al. (2014) and Monaco et al. (2005), who emphasize the emotional connection and familial continuity embedded in traditional food practices. Similarly,



Hanemaayer et al. (2020) suggest that traditional food consumption is sustained through shared family meals and cultural rituals—an observation strongly reflected in this study.

However, a different picture emerges when examining food choices made outside the home. Here, Gen Z exhibits a marked preference for modern and convenient options such as *ayam geprek*, *bakso*, and various forms of fast food. This shift is attributed to multiple factors including limited time, social influence, increased awareness of diet and nutrition, and the perception that traditional foods are too complicated or heavy. These findings resonate with the work of Lami et al. (2023) and Luppens and Power (2018), who discuss how globalized food systems and changing lifestyles drive young people away from traditional diets. Neufeld et al. (2017) also point out that urban environments and time pressures create conditions where convenience often trumps heritage.

Interestingly, the rejection of certain traditional dishes—especially those that are raw or bitter like *beberog* and *daun pahit*—adds a subtle but important dimension to the conversation. While the literature often discusses the loss of traditional foods in general terms, it rarely highlights the selective rejection of particular dishes based on taste or texture. This suggests that culinary heritage is not only challenged by modern alternatives but also by generational shifts in flavor preferences.

Yet, not all is lost. Several informants expressed pride and emotional attachment to traditional Sasak foods, even if they are no longer consumed as frequently. Some view these dishes as symbols of cultural identity and regional pride, echoing findings by Chen and Lin (2024) who observed that Gen Z values authenticity and local heritage, particularly when these values intersect with sustainability and wellness. This cultural awareness suggests a window of opportunity: although traditional dishes may not be part of daily life, they still hold symbolic significance for young people. As Hastiningsih and Sari (2023) noted, platforms like social media can play a critical role in reviving interest and reshaping the image of traditional foods among youth.

One of the more concerning findings of the study is the weak transmission of traditional cooking skills. Most young people interviewed do not know how to prepare these dishes and rely entirely on older generations. This confirms the concerns raised by Neufeld et al. (2017) and D'Andrea & D'Ulizia (2023), who argue that the erosion of culinary knowledge is a critical threat to food heritage preservation. Without active learning and practice, traditional recipes risk being remembered only in theory but lost in practice.

In summary, the findings of this study largely mirror global patterns in food consumption among youth, particularly the balance between convenience and cultural heritage. However, the case of Lombok adds valuable local texture to this discourse. While traditional Sasak foods are still respected and emotionally valued, their survival in daily practice is uncertain unless active efforts are made to modernize their appeal, simplify their preparation, and integrate them into the contemporary lifestyles of Gen Z.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that while traditional Sasak cuisine continues to hold emotional and cultural significance for Gen Z in Lombok, its role in their daily dietary practices is increasingly marginalized. Within the home, traditional dishes remain present largely due to parental influence, but outside the domestic setting, modern, fast, and easily accessible food dominates the choices of young consumers. Factors such as convenience, time constraints, peer influence, and a growing health consciousness contribute to this shift. More concerning is the waning interest in learning how to prepare traditional dishes, which puts the intergenerational transmission of culinary knowledge at risk. Although many Gen Z individuals express pride in their local food heritage, their engagement with it tends to be symbolic rather than practical.

RECOMMENDATION

To ensure the sustainability of traditional Sasak cuisine, there is an urgent need for targeted cultural and educational interventions. Culinary heritage must be made relevant and accessible to the younger generation by integrating traditional dishes into modern food experiences, school curricula, digital platforms, and youth-driven campaigns. Social media, in particular, offers a powerful medium to rebrand traditional food as trendy, sustainable, and identity-affirming. Cooking workshops, food festivals, and storytelling projects can also help revitalize interest in preparing traditional meals. By aligning cultural preservation efforts with the lifestyle and values of Gen Z—especially their appreciation for authenticity and local pride—traditional Sasak cuisine can be safeguarded not only as a memory of the past but as a meaningful part of the future.

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